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THE PRINCETON SEMINARY BULLETIN

Caring Really Counts—and Costs

Donald L. Anderson

Opening Convocation, Fall 1986

People and the Powers

Letty M. Russell

Warfield Lectures

Calvin's Use of Metaphorical Language for
God: God as Enemy and God as Mother

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Inaugural Address

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Sermons

Jesus' Final Exam
Magnificat

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VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 1

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Caring Really Counts— and Costs

by DONALD L. ANDERSON

Donald L. Anderson is executive director of the Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health in San Antonio, Texas. An alumnus of William Jennings Bryan College, Texas I&A University, and Trinity University, he received the Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of Austin. He is a licensed psychologist and has served also as executive director of Hospice San Antonio, Inc. Mr. Anderson serves on several committees dealing with biomedical ethics and social and moral values related to the health sciences.

Opening Convocation, Fall 1986

PRESIDENT GILLESPIE, distinguished faculty, students, and guests. When the invitation to come to Princeton to speak on this occasion reached me, I was startled beyond words. I'm not a card-carrying academic nor a renowned preacher. Then I reread the letter and it said, "Come and talk to us about what it means to minister to people," and that I felt I could do. I am not here to open new vistas of theological thought to you. Nor am I here to speak as a psychologist—there are times when I feel that the Kingdom has suffered enough at their hands. I am here because the course of my professional life changed dramatically fifteen years ago and a new goal of personal ministry came clearly to my personal horizon.

For twenty years I was a traditional minister/pastor. By most persons' standards I was rather successful in that role. A large church, a big budget, multiple staff, denominational responsibilities—I had all of these. But I also had a growing feeling that my part of the church may have been ministering rather well to crowds of people, but it was not doing well at all in dealing with individual, personal pain. So, motivated by what might be described as a sense of rightness, I moved to a fledgling organization—the Ecumenical Center for Religion and Health—a less traditional and vastly more personal ministry. At the Center we provide additional training for clergy. We hone counseling skills and further sensitize pastors to the pain their individual parishioners feel. We counsel individuals and families as an extension of the church's ministry. And we wrestle at the sides of physicians with huge ethical problems that advancing medical technology has placed on our doorstep. We organized a hospice to help the people of God love the dying into eternity. Such has been the course of my life and ministry for the last fifteen years.

So I am here today not to rally you to some cause with ethnic, political, or doctrinal issues at its base. I am here to remind you of lonely widows who weep their way through seemingly endless nights; of divorced persons who add a sense of failure to their aloneness; of a frightened cancer patient who wonders when and how the end will come; of the depressed person who doesn't want to live but is afraid to die; and of the clergyperson who feels fraudulent when the time for proclamation arrives. I am here to represent thousands of persons who are groping in "the dark night of the soul" and feeling guilty because they can't find the "brightly flowing river of God." I am here to confront you with the reality of fear and pain at life's roadsides being passed by those of us who wear religious robes. And to call you to a personal commitment to costly and intensely personal ministry.

Let others call you to speak and march for the masses. I know you will hear those calls and I hope you will respond with thoughtful dedication. God knows our world is filled with downtrodden groups who need and deserve our voice and our presence. We who represent the church must be willing to be indignant and to lay our comfortable existences on the line for great principles. Frankly, I do not feel that I have done enough of this in my ministry.

A few weeks ago I was in conversation with a very troubled fellow minister. When I tell you that he is an employee of an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention and is a man with a keen social conscience, you will begin to understand why he was troubled. It seems that he felt he would soon be asked to sign a statement of faith and practice which he questioned he would be able to sign in good conscience. He was weeks away from his 60th birthday—and not to sign might result in his being jobless.

In the course of our visit he recounted for me that in the late 1950s, he had been one of four Baptist ministers in a large southern city who had signed a public letter demanding, in the spirit of Jesus Christ, an end to all segregation. The Klan burned a cross in his yard (well, really, in his neighbor's yard—they were not good with numbers) and he eventually was fired for his stand. His eyes gleamed with an old fire when he told me, "I've done it once. Maybe I'll be courageous enough to lay down my career again for a principle. It's easier, though, at 30 than at 60."

For a moment I envied him. He was a man of proven courage. His faith commitment had been tested and he was strong because of it—probably stronger than I. Oh, I have scars from many an ecclesiastical battle; but most of them were incurred by accident. There have been too few deliberate sacrifices for great causes in my life.

So I am not telling you to turn your back on causes and significant issues.

I am telling you to choose the causes on which you stake your future very prayerfully. We have too many masochists in the Kingdom who think that their suffering is an end in itself. But when the issue is clear and you are called to address it, do it well. Run your risks. Be prophetic. But please do not march by or only talk about the cause of one person's suffering.

Because I am always trying to deal in both the religious and psychological realms, I have been thinking lately about the last days—the last events—of our Lord's time on the earth. Basically, I wanted to look at the way he handled stress. It seemed to me that He utilized three resources—His friends, His sense of purpose, and gut-level prayer. Besides dealing with His own stress, what was He about just before He left His disciples? Whatever it was it must have been of prime importance to Him. Time was short. There was little room for the extraneous, the unimportant in His life. He wanted to leave His special and precious friends with behaviors to model—lessons to remember. So what did he do? Well, of course, He met the intellectual antagonists head-on. He fought His personal battles in the Garden and on the cross. But much of what He did was ordinary, run-of-the-mill caring for and teaching His little flock.

He did an un-Jesus-like thing when He cursed the fig tree. It was not His style to go around zapping trees. Yet, time was short and He had to say to His followers, "Be consistent. Live up to what you profess. If you purport to identify with me, produce what I would produce. An un-caring Christian is a contradiction in terms."

He called them to the Passover Supper and that strange new ritual of communion—and washed their feet. There was a profound message written on that towel in the upper room. "The mark of discipleship is serving—not being served." Then there was the cross. Over the hideous scene of Good Friday was etched the message, "Greater love has no man than this—that he lay down his life for his friends."

After the resurrection, His friends remembered and recorded some pretty mundane behaviors. A walk on the road to Emmaus—and the breaking of bread there. Sunrise on the shore of Lake Galilee and Jesus cooking breakfast for his frustrated followers. Not dramatic actions. Just meeting people where they were and being sensitive to and caring for their very human needs.

Look at what we know about Jesus. He spent time preaching and teaching; but most of what He did was with one or just a few. He was always sensitive to individual, personal need. He moves through a throng of people, and reacts to the timid touch of a needy woman.

I guess all of us have a favorite candid shot of Jesus that is locked in our memory. Those who major in preaching may see him preaching to thousands on a Galilean hillside. The teachers among us probably picture Him confronting the intelligentsia on the Temple grounds. Somehow my frame of reference is around a Man with little children on his lap or a mourner weeping in the dusty street of Bethany after Lazarus had died. Each picture is authentic. But the whole is at least the sum of the parts. He was the superior preacher who hung eternal truths on birds and flowers. His logic was peerless when He taught eternal truth. And He was the gentle, loving healer who could not turn His back on personal pain or need. The danger is that each of us will think that our image of Him is the total Jesus. He was, and we must be, preacher, teacher, *and* personal friend and healer. If we are to be mirror images of Him, we must be all these persons.

Princeton will teach you to preach—and preach with the best. Your education here will equip you to teach well—to grapple effectively with the intelligentsia. But only in who you are—who you can become—will you find the caring component. I tell you, though, that without caring that is demonstrated in person-to-person ministry you will be “a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal”—a well-gilded church ornament that lacks a heartbeat.

Who are these hurting people who call out to us? I seem to remember that a lawyer asked Jesus a similar question. The teacher had said that His people were to “. . . love your neighbor as yourself.” His retort was, “Who is my neighbor?” In response to this question, the Lord told the story of the Good Samaritan. Your neighbor is not a product of geography or race. When you see a person in need—you have found your neighbor. The broken persons who need your help will not advertise their needs. Their cries will only be heard by those who want to hear. And responding to their cries will seldom produce spectacular events. Your personal, caring ministry will not be front page news.

I would not be true to my feelings—my personal concerns and commitment—if I did not tell you that sometimes these soft cries may come from those closest to us—our own family members. The stories of ministers who ride off to answer the calls of church members while failing to hear the plaintive cries of their spouses or children are legion. We are called to care for all of God’s children. The fact that they are “ours” should not exempt them from our care. Antithetically, it should grant them some priority since they have no pastor to compensate for our neglect.

Just as my personal concerns lead to my images of the Christ, so these concerns have led to my imaging of a minister. I find my picture of the called

ones in the story. He told about the Samaritan. The total carer got into the ditch and held the frightened, bloody victim. It was not convenient—it even hurt; but need defined his neighbor and he couldn't fail to respond to his neighbor's cries.

I heard a contemporary sequel to this story seven years ago. The Ecumenical Center board had instructed me to investigate the hospice movement—to visit different programs and evaluate them. One of the institutions I visited was in Tucson, Arizona. And there I heard a story of caring I will never forget.

I visited Hillhaven Hospice—a 33-bed institutional hospice. When I interviewed the chaplain on a Tuesday morning, he told me that eight of their thirty patients had died over the last weekend. Knowing how close-knit a family (care-takers and care-receivers) they were, I asked him about the effect of so many deaths on the staff. He replied that it was tough—but then recited for me the most moving story I had ever heard.

It was the story of one patient—one death. He told me that on Saturday one of their patients who had been there a couple of months had a visit from her teenaged son. The staff said that it must have been a great visit because there were laughs and jovial conversation. At noon the boy said, "I'm going to have lunch with some friends, I'll be back later, Mom." After he left the patient called her favorite nurse and said, "I think this may be it. I may be dying." The nurse checked her vital signs and replied honestly, "It's possible that you are." The patient then said to her nurse friend, "Will you hold me? I think if you hold me I can do this well." The nurse got into the bed and cradled that emaciated little body in her arms—and held her into eternity.

What a story! All I knew to ask the chaplain was, "What about the nurse? What did it do to her?" He replied that she had taken four days off to go to the mountains to think and feel and decide whether to come back to work again. I asked whether in his judgment she would return to the job. "She'll be back," he said. "You learn in a place like this that caring hurts—but when you really care you offer something special—and become special yourself."

There it is—in dramatic form. This is ministry—this is the church—this is the minister at his/her complete best. How will they know that "underneath are the everlasting arms" if they do not feel the moral arms beneath them in a hundred ways.

The message is—caring counts—caring costs.

It's in caring that you will know that your life has counted—whatever the costs.

People and the Powers

by LETTY M. RUSSELL

Letty M. Russell is professor of theology at Yale University Divinity School. She is an alumna of Wellesley College, Harvard Divinity School, and Union Theological Seminary. Her career has embraced diversity—in addition to teaching and writing, she has served as director of Christian education for the East Harlem Protestant Parish and later was pastor of the Presbyterian Church of the Ascension in East Harlem. Her long involvement with this community left her with a deep concern for all forms of human liberation.

This lecture was one of six Warfield Lectures given in March 1986. The complete lectures will be published by Westminster Press (spring 1987) under the title Household of Freedom: Authority in Feminist Theology.

IN HIS ARTICLE ON “Messiah and Minjung,” Kim Yong-Bock says that “messianic aspirations of the people arise out of the historical confrontation between the people and the powers.”¹ As in other liberation theologies, Korean Minjung theology, eschatology provides the dimension of liberation in the midst of struggle. The articulation of “hope against hope” in situations of “no hope” provides the transcendent dimension of life in the midst of death (Rom. 4:18). As we have already seen, the authority of the future in feminist theologies has this same root. The expectation of a messianic fulfillment of God’s promises for mended creation arises in concrete circumstances where people are struggling against the powers of sexist, classist, and racist oppression.

People everywhere experience the social and spiritual manifestations of the paradigm of authority as domination and its metaphors of bondage. In most circumstances they also accept this view of reality and remain trapped in the power structures of our world, described in the New Testament translations as “principalities and powers.” But as people, like those in the early Christian communities, become aware of the possibility of a change in that reality, they begin to make a stand against the powers. Those who are Christians draw their courage and strength from the memory of the future—the

¹ Kim Yong-Bock, “Messiah and Minjung: Discerning Messianic Politics over against Political Messianism.” In *Minjung Theology: People as the Subjects of History*, ed. by the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (CTC-CCA) (Orbis, 1983 [1981]), p. 186.

memory of a Messiah or Savior who stood with the people against the powers, was crucified by these powers, yet continues to live victorious in their midst. The presence of Christ among the people establishes signs of a new political reality called the Reign of God in which persons have the possibility of life together in a household of freedom.

Messianic Politics

We live in a world of many messiahs offering salvation to the people for many different ills of our lives. Theologians from Latin America and Asia alike remind us that our economic and political rulers are included among those who offer the false hopes of *political messianism*.² The language of war, conquest, and development is couched in the offer of national power, pride, and prosperity. Yet it conceals the reality of victimization and despair among the exploited, poor, starving, and dying peoples whose lives sustain that rhetoric. Among this group of those exploited by political messianism are the women who are the poor of the poor, the minjung of the minjung, the oppressed of the oppressed. One thinks for instance of those killed, raped, and brutally separated from husbands and children in war; of those driven to prostitution in order to feed their families; or of those reduced to blindness at the age of thirty from bending over a microscope to produce microchips for our computers.

All too frequently the response of the Christian churches to this situation of idolatry, in which nations have become as gods, is another form of false messianism; a spiritualized message of salvation which offers salvation of the soul while ignoring the cries of God's people and God's intention of justice. In response to this, feminist and liberation theologians call for a form of expectant hope that is rooted in political and social reality. Kim Yong-Bock calls this *messianic politics* because it retains the dimension of divine transcendence through identification with the work of the Messiah, but is rooted in the experience of the *minjung*, the politically oppressed, economically exploited, socially marginalized, and culturally despised and ignored people of Korea.³

This form of eschatology locates the mandate for social justice, not in

² Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung," pp. 183-93. Cf. Rubem A. Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope* (Corpus Books, 1969).

³ Peggy Billings with Moon Tong Hwan, Han Wan Sang, Son Myong Gul, Pharis Harvey, *Fire Beneath the Frost* (Friendship Press, 1984), p. 9. Cf. also *Minjung Theology*, pp. 35, 142-43; and Suh Kwang Sun David, "Theology of Story Telling: A Theology by Minjung," In *Ministerial Formation* (Geneva: Program on Theological Education, World Council of Churches) 31 (September 1985), pp. 10-22.

some secular ideology, but in the resurrection itself. Thus Rubem Alves says that the language of resurrection portrays Jesus as, "... not a *fact*, simply, but rather the *factor* of history, the power of freedom that creates the facts of liberation."⁴ And a feminist theologian like Rosemary Ruether writes:

The primary vision of salvation in the bible is that of an alternative future, a new society of peace and justice that will arise when the present systems of injustice have been overthrown.⁵

The story of the suffering Messiah provides a paradigm for understanding the collective messianic role of the oppressed in struggling for freedom. Messianic politics is understood as a political process in which, as Yong-Bock says, the minjung join the Messiah in realizing his messianic role, while political (ruling class) messianism attempts to use and sacrifice the minjung to its own false messianic claims.⁶

This identification of the poor and marginalized with the history of the Messiah is not new. This seems to be the intent of Jesus' parable of the last judgment in Matthew 25:31-46. It appears that Jesus is not just providing us with a description of church or world history, rather that he is telling his own history of identification of the poor and outcasts so that together with the Messiah, all who hunger or thirst, all who are naked, sick, or in prison, become the real presence of God's mending work.⁷ In solidarity with the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters we find a social biography of struggle which continues Jesus' own story. This is not because the oppressed are more righteous than those of oppressor groups. Rather it is because serving the cause of Jesus and welcoming the outcasts into society is a sign of God's presence in our midst, a sign that God's will is done on earth. As Krister Stendahl has put it, praying for the coming of God's kingdom is praying for a redeemed, healed, mended creation.

Wherever, whenever, however the kingdom manifests itself, it is welcome: in a healed body, in a restored mind, in a more just society, in a human heart that finds the power to forgive, in the faith and trust of a

⁴ Alves, *A Theology of Human Hope*, pp. 131-32.

⁵ Rosemary Radford Ruether, "A Religion for Women: Sources and Strategies," in *Christianity and Crisis* 39:19 (December 10, 1979), p. 309. Cf. L. Russell, "Minjung Theology in Women's Perspective." In forthcoming book of critical reflections on *Minjung Theology*, ed. by Jung Young Lee (Orbis Books, 1987).

⁶ Yong-Bock, "Messiah and Minjung," p. 191.

⁷ I am indebted in this interpretation to my husband, the late Johannes (Jans) Christiaan Hoekendijk.

Canaanite mother, in the death and resurrection of the Messiah, in a new heaven and a new earth where justice dwells. . . .⁸

Those who are considered "the sinners and tax collectors," the rejects of any society, are also the center of the story of salvation because it is they who can tell when God's will is being done (Mark 2:13-17). They are the ones who must be about remaking society if it is going to be a significant "remaking."⁹ For the victims of society know if justice is being done, and if creation is being mended. Like Zacchaeus, their joy is very great when they find themselves included in the plans of God's Messiah, for even those like Zacchaeus, who served the Roman powers as tax collector, know they are outcasts in their own society and long for acceptance (Luke 19:1-10). In identifying with messianic politics everyone has the opportunity to repent, and to join in the struggle to include all persons in God's household of freedom (Matt. 5:25). This is not just past history, it is the present story of Jesus, a story that can become our story. Thus Gutierrez says,

When you place your hope in the Lord and sink your roots into the concrete power of the poor in history, you are not living in nostalgia. You are living in a present moment, whose direction is forward.¹⁰

When this story becomes our story, we find ourselves in a movement with many other very different kinds of persons, yet we come to share the same new household. Bernice Johnson Reagon makes the difficulty of such coalitions for change very explicit.

You don't go into a coalition because you just *like* it. The only reason you would consider trying to team up with someone who could possibly kill you is because that's the only way you can figure you can stay alive.¹¹

⁸ Krister Stendahl, " 'When you pray, pray in this manner . . . ' a Bible study," *The Kingdom on its Way: Meditations and Music for Mission*. The Risk Book Series (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1980), pp. 40-41.

⁹ Ahn Byung-Mu, "Jesus and the Minjung in the Gospel of Mark." In *Minjung Theology*, pp. 138-52; Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (South End Press, 1984), p. 161.

¹⁰ Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History* (Orbis Press), p. 200. The image of Zacchaeus is important for those who are prosperous and think there is nothing they can do to participate in the messianic story. Cf. Elizabeth Randall, "The Rich Young Ruler and Zacchaeus: Changing Paradigms," unpublished paper for Issues in Liberation Theology (Yale Divinity School, 1985).

¹¹ Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics Turning the Century." In *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. by Barbara Smith (Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press, 1983), pp. 356-57.

I often find myself caught in such coalition problems because like many other white, middle-class women, I am "status inconsistent." I belong to a very privileged group whose race, nationality, education, and occupation identify them with oppressor groups who definitely might just kill (and do kill) uppity black women like Bernice Johnson Reagon, a leading singer in the Sweet Honey rock ensemble. Yet as a woman I am also a member of a dominated group and in need of coalitions with persons in other dominated groups as I seek to participate in messianic politics. Any woman or man of color has good reason to distrust me, and I have good reason to distrust men of every color. Yet, work together we must.

One experience I had of this difficult and risky coalition building was at an international conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, held in Geneva in 1983.¹² After meeting by themselves for a period of years, the third world theologians invited liberation and feminist theologians from the first world to dialogue about our common agenda. This was a very exciting time for me because the people present all shared what could be called a commitment to messianic politics. We made use of similar theological methods, beginning with the stories of struggle in our own context to understand God's action of liberation in that place and to participate in that mission. But there was a great deal of suspicion directed at those of us who came from oppressor races and nations, and I had a great deal of suspicion toward delegations, from third world countries, that were largely male.

I discovered, however, that there was a point at which we all could come together to hear one another into speech and action, and that was at the *point of pain*. The theology that we did together became liberation theology as we discovered our own marginalization or cross as a result of our commitment to oppressed people. In suffering there is not only solidarity with the people, but there is also empowerment to share together in Christ's messianic sufferings (Mark 10:35). Messianic politics includes the suffering that comes with opposing the principalities and powers. At the hands of these powers, the "kingdom of heaven suffers violence," and those who work to keep it from being snatched away may find that their journey is not without risk. Speaking about this difficult saying from Matthew 11:12, Marta Benavides has described her ministry in the midst of the violence of El Salvador in the following way:

You have to have *faith* in God just to be able to sleep at all. You have to *believe* in the people just to get out of bed; believe that you can do what

¹² Cf. L. Russell, "Reflections from a First World Perspective." In *Doing Theology in a Divided World*, ed. by Virginia Fabella and Sergio Torres (Orbis Books, 1985).

needs to be done. You have to "baptize" yourself each day to get the will to conspire for peace.¹³

Against the Powers

The conviction of messianic politics is that there is power among the people to stand against the powers, but that this is clearly not without cost. The use of the term *powers* here refers to the language of power that, according to Walter Wink in *Naming the Powers*, pervades the whole New Testament, for, "No New Testament book is without the language of power." The familiar translation of *archai* and *exousiai* as "principalities and powers" is the focal point of much research about the powers, but the New Testament has many other paired words and strings of words for power, authority, rulers, kings, angels, chief priests, name, wisdom, and commission.¹⁴ In teaching with authority and using his healing power to exorcize demonic powers, Jesus confronted both seen and unseen powers, and paid the cost of this confrontation. His life, death, and resurrection were all signs that the rule of God was coming in power to confront the old structures of death and domination. By his actions Jesus empowers others to faith, new life, and partnership in God's new reality.

The terms for power in the New Testament are very fluid and imprecise and the translations of the terms magnify that imprecision. But according to Wink we can discern a pattern in the use of the words as, for instance, with the two words often translated "authority" and "power."

Exousia denotes the legitimations and sanctions by which power is maintained; it generally tends to be abstract. *Dynamis* overlaps with *exousia* in the area of sanctions; it refers to power or force by which rule is maintained.¹⁵

The powers are understood as both good and evil, heavenly and earthly, divine and human, spiritual and political, invisible and structural. Every outward social or political structure is understood as also having an inward spiritual aspect, but in Wink's view they are generally encountered in some outward form. For instance, "principalities and powers" indicates human

¹³ Marta Benavides, untitled speech at Yale Divinity School (October 5, 1985).

¹⁴ Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*. The Powers, vol. 1 (Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 7-8. Cf. vol. 2, *Unmasking the Powers* (1986) and vol. 3, *Engaging the Powers* (publication date unknown). Cf. also Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Fortress Press, 1985), p. 4. "If, as Ernst Käsemann has pointed out, the central question of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic theology is the question of power, the Rev. is clearly an articulation of such a theology."

¹⁵ Wink, *Naming the Powers*, p. 10.

agents and institutions in the two places it appears in the gospels, Luke 12:11 and 20:20. The other eight occurrences, more complex in reference, are found in the Pauline and post-Pauline epistles.¹⁶

Ephesians 6:10-20 gives us a very good example of the piling up of power words to demonstrate what Christians are up against as they seek to live out a life of faith. Using the image of the armor of God strong enough to protect God's people, the author declares:

For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present evil age, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Eph. 6:12-13).

The imagery of powers here is so poetic that it is hard to say exactly what it means. But, according to Marcus Barth, they probably mean "... those institutions and structures by which earthly matters and invisible realms are administered and without which no human life is possible."¹⁷ In modern times we might call these the social, political, economic, cultural, and biological structures that guide world history, as long as we remember that they are not "just political structures" but also contain spiritual power as well.¹⁸ Under the influence of the power of evil, they oppose the power of good and those who seek to live under that power. Just as God's power fills both heaven and earth, this power is able to operate in all spheres of creation and therefore is called, "spiritual host of wickedness in heavenly places."

Those who want to withstand these powers are assured of the power and victory of God's love, but, in the meanwhile, their task is to *make a stand* against unjust and oppressive powers. Their splendid armor is designed by God to help make that stand in the real world. Like the little nation of Nicaragua today as it faces the US military giant, the little churches of Asia Minor had no hope except God, and those who shared their longing for a new and just way of life. This "rag tag band" on its way to the Promised Land was equipped with the Spirit of God, not by its own doing, but by the One who chose to equip them with the gospel of peace even when they were under attack.

It seems here that this passage goes against everything that I have been

¹⁶ Wink, *Naming the Powers*, pp. 5, 7-8.

¹⁷ Marcus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3* (Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1974), p. 174.

¹⁸ Letty M. Russell, *Imitators of God: A Study Book on Ephesians* (The Women's Division, the United Methodist Church, 1984), p. 120.

saying about the possibility of alternative paradigms for power and authority. The author appears to encourage the struggling Ephesian community of peace and reconciliation to emulate the patriarchal oppressor—taking over the Roman armor—the Master's tools. In verse 20, however, we discover that the social location of the speaker is imaged as a jail cell, not a battlefield. Paul is described as an "ambassador in chains." As a prisoner for Christ he is able to look out at the armor of his Roman guard and put it to a different use, renaming the pieces of the armor as the gifts of God's spirit whose Messiah has brought peace, righteousness, truth, faithfulness, and "equity for the meek of the earth" (Isaiah 11:2-7).

Even so this warfare metaphor is drawn straight from the paradigm of authority as domination, and it can be a dangerous, masculine image of courage in our world, so full of violence. The clue here is to remember that how one works for peace and opposes the powers depends on the place you are standing. The biblical message, like all messages, is *situation variable*, and can mean different things in different situations. This Ephesians text about armor can be a dangerous excuse for triumphalism and military glorification when heard by people who are powerful, or a dangerous cop-out for disembodied spirituality when used as an otherworldly message for the comfortable. On the other hand, those who are struggling for life against death, struggling like the early Christian communities, may very well find that these words about the power of God's love can keep them going when all else fails.

This is, of course, why there is no one description of powers or of how these powers may be transformed by God. Transforming the power when one is in a subordinate power location may mean actions of confrontation, while it may mean abdication or reconciliation when one is part of the more powerful group.¹⁹ This is an important clue for dealing with authority and power in such a way that one moves toward authorizing and empowerment, in spite of all the ambiguities of any social situation. For instance, the amount of ability one has to accomplish a particular end often determines what might be a possible strategy. I have often said that "I only fight with friends," thinking that this is either because I am too sensitive, too afraid to do otherwise, or that I really do not like to hurt people and so only enjoy arguing or competing when there is mutual trust and no intent to hurt. But according to critical analysis of power standpoint, I also see that one only fights in an "old fashioned: toe-to-toe combat" in a situation of equality. Otherwise one seeks other ways to settle with the one who already has most of the power.

¹⁹ Paula Cooley, "The Power of Transformation and the Transformation of Power," in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 1:1 (Spring 1985), pp. 23-36.

This is, of course, why guerrilla warfare is so popular, and why women often have to resort to manipulation to accomplish their goals.

A similar power standpoint analysis is needed to understand why women who enter the professional ministry have so much difficulty dealing with power and authority. They are called to their first parish and decide to exercise authority as partnership. You know what happens, it doesn't work. Why? Because the new pastor does not realize that power is standpoint dependent. She cannot decide to share power and work in a process of empowerment until her authority has been recognized as legitimate by the congregation. She has the legitimacy of employment and ordination, but the congregation may not perceive her as legitimate because she does not fit the accustomed Father role. Through spending time in pastoral caring and in clarifying the job description, decision making, and communication, she may overcome initial sexist attitudes and be able to come to a point of self-empowerment and sharing of power with others.

Empowerment of the people in the struggle against the powers of domination is possible for those who follow the One who has confronted those religious, political, and economic structures. But the strategies of messianic politics vary works according to the situation and the power positions involved. A second clue to making a stand against the powers is to remember that the *weak do have power*. The weak can exercise their power in destructive or constructive ways, just like the strong. They have the same ability to accomplish desired goals even though the weak may have to work in different styles because of the power differential. According to Hannah Arendt power is always a "power potential" and is always changeable.²⁰ The people are the source of power because they are the ones who cooperate with the powers. It is both the obedience and the productivity of those who are weak that contributes to the power of the strong.²¹

Power comes into existence between persons because they respond through habit to the authority, reward systems, expertise, skills, and language used by those in control. But people can also question this process of obedience. For instance, Elizabeth Janeway has pointed out that two *Powers of the Weak* are disbelief and coming together.²² Disbelief is a way of delegitimizing the power exerted by authorities through their language and paradigms of thought and action. As authority only works when the rela-

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 200-1.

²¹ Douglas P. Biklen, *Community Organizing: Theory and Practice* (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), pp. 21-28.

²² Elizabeth Janeway, *Powers of the Weak* (Morrow Quill Paperback, 1981), pp. 157-85.

tionship of assent is accepted by the less powerful parties, disbelief becomes a powerful tool for standing against the powers. Coming together provides the solidarity and support that make it possible for the weak to retain their vision of an alternative society and world.

A final clue for those who wish to stand against the powers in order to create a new household of freedom is to *avoid dualism*. In our brief analysis of "the powers," as well as of messianic politics, we have seen that those who allow a dualistic view of either structural or spiritual powers, or of politics or individual salvation, do not have an adequate analysis of the strength of the powers of domination in their lives. The armor of God's love is all the more necessary because the powers are not just flesh and blood, they are also corporate spirits of domination that rule our minds and spirits. As we saw, messianic politics combines both the political and the transcendent dimensions of the struggle of the people against the powers and refuses to let the struggle be understood either as purely secular or as purely spiritual. In the same way, Wink has helped us understand that the powers always include both the spiritual and the material aspects of the hierarchies of domination and evil.

An example Wink has given of the way the powers have spiritual as well as material power comes from a conversation he had with a woman he met on a trip to Latin America. The woman had been brutally tortured, and she was trying to understand how people could be so evil and utterly inhuman. As Wink put it, "... idolatry to the Powers captures people. People give themselves over to the idols, in the name of which an evil is good if it serves that idol."²³ For instance, the idol of national security justifies military build-up, denial of human rights, and murder because anything opposed to such an idol is evil. Against such idols of death Christians and all women and men of courage must choose life and refuse to accept domination of the death dealing powers (Deut. 30:19).²⁴

The Household, the Power, and the Glory

A dualistic approach to a struggle of people against the powers is well illustrated in Graham Greene's 1940 novel about religious persecution in Mexico, entitled *The Power and the Glory*.²⁵ The martyr-priest becomes one of the persecuted people because of his refusal to deny his ordination and his seeming inability to escape. Here Greene presents a Christ figure who is a

²³ Walter Wink, "Idol Time," in *The Auburn News* (Auburn Theological Seminary, New York, Fall 1982), pp. 2, 5.

²⁴ Dorothee Soelle, *Choosing Life* (Fortress Press, 1981), p. 7.

²⁵ Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory* (The Viking Press, 1940).

whiskey priest and another who is a military lieutenant bent on saving the people even if he has to kill hostages in every village. The power and the glory struggle to be born out of the lives of marginal people who are the "nobodies" of the church and of the world. But the dualistic view of religion among the people allows the priest to think of himself only as a sinner and a wino and yet as the one who holds the means of salvation through the wine and bread. In the same way the Lieutenant sees himself as a savior of his people, and yet holds the means of life and death through violence.

A glimpse of power and glory is there in this Crucifixion drama, but one is left with a fatalistic religion that means suffering for the people and a revolution that means only more suffering. The alternative of messianic politics would understand that the stand against the powers can be made as part of one's religious commitment and not against it. In fact, such a stand for justice and shalom is a sign of God's power at work, a sign of the power and the glory. The metaphor in the New Testament used for God's gracious power is that of the kingdom or reign of God. Although drawn from the social reality of the biblical world, the language of kingdom was not intended to image God's reign like that of Caesar. Rather the use of the term in the parables and parabolic actions of Jesus was iconoclastic. He turned the word kingdom on its head so that those at the bottom of the pyramid became the first in the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14; Matt. 19:30). Rosemary Ruether emphasizes this in saying,

... in the iconoclastic messianic vision, it is the women of the despised and the outcast peoples who are seen as the bottom of the present hierarchy and hence, in a special way, the last who shall be first in the kingdom.²⁶

Scholars have a great deal of difficulty translating the kingdom metaphor, for it is intended to convey not a spatial image of place, but rather a relational image of obedience. God's reign occurs in heaven, as on earth, wherever people do God's will of mending the creation. It seems to me that one way of making it clear that the image itself intends to empty out the paradigm of domination is to use another metaphor, that of the household. If we were to pray, "For thine is the *household*, and the power, and the glory . . .," this might convey to us that God's power and glory are to be seen not in domination, but in the householding of God's world. As we have already seen, this metaphor is not unfamiliar in the New Testament. For instance the parable of the leaven compares the household of God to "... a leaven which a

²⁶ Rosemary Radford Ruether, *To Change the World: Christological and Cultural Criticism* (Crossroad, 1981), pp. 55-56.

woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened" (Luke 13:20-21). God's power works like a leaven, in humble circumstances but in a way that transforms both personal and social relationships.²⁷

Domestic images for the kingdom abound in the New Testament. One of the most favorite images is that of table fellowship. Such festive household meals are Jubilee celebrations to which the outsiders, the poor, the sick and disabled, the tax collectors, sinners, and prostitutes are all welcome (Luke 14:15-24). The household is also an important eschatological metaphor in John 14:2 where he speaks of God's house which has many rooms. Jesus is even imaged as the one whose job is to get the rooms ready for the guests! In Mark 3:24-25, the kingdom (*basileia*) and household (*oikia*) are related in the parable of the house divided against itself:

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

The Matthew 12:25 version of this parable also relates the city (*polis*) with the other two terms. As Elisabeth Fiorenza has pointed out, the intent here is to speak of "inclusive wholeness."²⁸ The household transcends divisions between public and private sectors and claims the whole for the arena of God's powerful love.

In addition to word and metaphor association between household and kingdom, we find household imagery is associated with the parousia in different parts of the New Testament. One thinks not only of the John 14:2 passage about the heavenly temple or dwelling place but also of texts that compare the house or body to the heavenly body (2 Cor. 5:1-10; 2 Peter 1:13; Matt. 16:18). The new community built up as a household by Christ is also one that can withstand the "powers of death" (Matt. 16-18).²⁹ Here the household is called the church, and, as I have already noted, this use of the eschatological metaphor of household gradually appears less and less in its eschatological form and becomes identified with the church.

This raises both a problem and a possibility for using the term household of God for the kingdom of God. It confuses people who have come to associate the term with the household language of I Peter which speaks of the

²⁷ Sharon H. Ringe, *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee* (Fortress Press, 1985), p. 4. Ringe notes two reversals in the parable: the domestic imagery for God, and the leaven as a positive symbol, rather than a substance banned from the household at Passover (Exodus 12:14-20).

²⁸ Elisabeth Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her* (Crossroad, 1983), p. 118.

²⁹ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, Vol. 5 (Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1967), pp. 131-38.

building up of the church community as a "home for the homeless," as well as of the judgment that begins in its midst (I Peter 2:4-10; 4:17).³⁰ Yet it is clear in the New Testament there is always the understanding that the household can be the gathered community but also it can be the eschatological reality of a new heaven and new earth. The Christian people are not the only ones who belong in God's household as we have seen from Matthew 25. It is important to broaden our vision of what household might mean, not only beyond the old Roman household of domination in the private sector, but also beyond the church itself which is only one small sign of God's power at work among all the nations of the *oikoumene*.³¹

People who are victims of the powers are also welcomed by Christ into his story, as participants in building the new household of freedom. Surely they too must become for us a messianic sign, a sacrament of the poor, along with the sacrament of the household meal, that speaks of the power of God, the housekeeper. As Adrienne Rich has put it in her poem "Natural Resources":

My heart is moved by all I cannot save: so much has been destroyed
I have to cast my lot with those who age after age, perversely,
with not extraordinary power, reconstitute the world.³²

³⁰ John H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless* (Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 165-266.

³¹ M. Douglas Meeks, *The Doctrine of God in Political Economy* (Fortress Press, 1986). Meeks has written extensively about "God as economist," making use of the household metaphor in terms of the need for reimagining God's justice in economic and political structures.

³² Adrienne Rich, "Natural Resources." In *The Dream of a Common Language: Poems 1974-77* (W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1978), p. 67.

Calvin's Use of Metaphorical Language for God: God as Enemy and God as Mother

by JANE DEMPSEY DOUGLASS

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Inaugural Address

IN LIGHT of recent interest in Calvin as a humanist rhetorician¹ and also of the broadly shared interest today in the nature of religious language, it seems appropriate to call attention to Calvin's fascination with metaphor for God. What is striking in Calvin's writing is not that he uses metaphors for God abundantly—for theologians have always done so—but that he deliberately analyzes so often the biblical use of metaphor. Calvin himself has become attuned to biblical imagery as imagery, and he is seriously working to raise the consciousness of his audience to understand the proper use of that metaphor in theology. For example, in his commentary on Isaiah 40:18, a discussion of idolatry, Calvin writes:

In order to know God, therefore, we must not frame a likeness of him according to our fancy, but we must betake ourselves to the Word, in which his own lively image is exhibited to us. Satisfied with that communication, let us not attempt anything else of our own. Other ways and methods, such as idols and representations [*imagines*] teach us vanity and falsehood, and not truth. . . . When the Lord sometimes compares himself to a lion, a bear, a man, or other objects, this has nothing to do with representations [*imagines*], as the Papists imagine, but by those metaphors

¹ See for example William J. Bouwsma, "Renaissance and Reformation: An Essay in Their Affinities and Connections," in *Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), pp. 127-49; Bouwsma, "Calvin and the Renaissance Crisis of Knowing," *Calvin Theological Journal* 17 (1982), pp. 190-211; E. David Willis, "Rhetoric and Responsibility in Calvin's Theology," in *The Context of Contemporary Theology*, ed. Willis and Alexander J. McKelway (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), pp. 43-64.

either the kindness and mercy of God, or his wrath and displeasure, and other things of the same nature, are expressed; for God cannot reveal himself to us in any other way than by a comparison with things which we know.²

Metaphorical speech is for Calvin a prime means by which God accommodates divine realities to human comprehension, a kind of babytalk such as adults use with children.³ All revelation depends on such accommodation by God to human language and experience. In fact, the incarnation itself is the supreme example of God's accommodating divine revelation to human capacities.⁴ Edward Dowey has discussed the importance of the theme of accommodation in Calvin's thought,⁵ and F. L. Battles has especially pointed out its sources in classical rhetoric and in the early church.⁶

In this paper I will discuss Calvin's handling of two relatively uncommon metaphors for God. The first is that of God as enemy, the second, that of God as mother. The first, God as enemy, is discussed in the *Institutes*. Though Calvin scholars regularly address the hostility of God to sinners, they rarely place the matter in the context of metaphor. The second metaphor, God as mother, is discussed by Calvin only in commentaries and sermons, and this discussion seems to have gone largely unnoticed by his students.

Let us turn first to the question of God as enemy, or the wrath of God. Calvin, in Book II of the *Institutes*, devoted to knowledge of God the Redeemer, calls attention to the possible contradiction created by calling God the enemy of sinners until the reconciliation in Christ and yet saying that God anticipates them with mercy, therefore loving them even before reconciliation. Calvin here translates Romans 5:10 as, "God was an enemy [or hostile] to human beings until they were restored into grace by the death of Christ." Calvin explains this apparent contradiction by seeing the image of a hostile God as metaphorical accommodation.

Expressions of this sort have been accommodated to our capacity that we may better understand how miserable and ruinous our condition is apart

² Com. Isa., C.O. 37, 19. Translation by William Pringle, *Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah by John Calvin* (Grand Rapids, 1948), III, p. 223, slightly altered. Luther on this text deals only with idolatry; W.A. 31-32, 276-77.

³ Inst. I, xiii, 1.

⁴ Com. I Pet., C.O. 55, 227. Cf. Inst. II, xii, 1.

⁵ Edward H. Dowey, Jr., *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1952), pp. 1-18, 243-44.

⁶ Ford Lewis Battles, "God Was Accommodating Himself to Human Capacity," *Interpretation* 31 (1977), pp. 19-38. Cf. H. Jackson Forstman, *Word and Spirit: Calvin's Doctrine of Biblical Authority* (Stanford, 1962), ch. 7.

from Christ. For if it had not been clearly stated that the wrath and vengeance of God and eternal death rested upon us, we would scarcely have recognized how miserable we would have been without God's mercy, and we would have underestimated the benefit of liberation. . . . To sum up: since our hearts cannot, in God's mercy, either seize upon life ardently enough or accept it with the gratefulness we owe, unless our minds are first struck and overwhelmed by fear of God's wrath and by dread of eternal death, we are taught by Scripture to perceive that apart from Christ, God is, so to speak, hostile to us, and his hand is armed for our destruction; to embrace his benevolence and fatherly love in Christ alone.⁷

Calvin further explains that all humanity has sin deserving of God's hatred, and yet God is moved by freely-given love of God's own creatures to will reconciliation in Christ.⁸

The idea that "the wrath of God" is not to be taken literally does not of course originate with Calvin. Augustine in the early church and Erasmus in the sixteenth century, for example, both caution readers on this matter. Augustine, in discussing the damned in hell, says, ". . . the wrath of God, that is, their condemnation (for it is this, and not any disturbed feeling in the mind of God that is called His wrath) abideth upon them. . . ."⁹ Commenting on the same text (Rom. 5:10) which gave rise to Calvin's discussion about God as enemy before reconciliation in Christ, Augustine says,

Now when God is said to be angry, we do not attribute to Him such a disturbed feeling as exists in the mind of an angry man; but we call His just displeasure against sin by the name "anger," a word transferred by analogy from human emotions.¹⁰

Erasmus describes the use of such language in this way:

Holy Scripture has its own language, adapted to our understanding. There God is angry, grieves, is indignant, rages, threatens, hates, and

⁷ Inst. II, xvi, 2. All English translations quoted from the Inst. are from *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960). Cf. Inst. III, iv, 32-34 for a similar discussion of Christians' perception of God in the context of suffering.

⁸ Inst. II, xvi, 3. Cf. parallel discussion in Rom. 5:10. Com. Rom., C.O. 49, 94. Luther in his commentary on the same text shows no interest in the problem of God as enemy: W.A. 56, 309; nor does Melancthon: C.R. 15, 906ff. See Calvin's quotation from Augustine, Inst. II, xvi, 4.

⁹ *Enchiridion*, ch. cxii, C.C. 46, 109; translation by Whitney J. Oates, *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine* (New York, 1948), I, p. 724.

¹⁰ *Enchiridion*, ch. xxxiii, C.C. 46, 68; Oates, I, p. 678.

again has mercy, repents, changes his mind, not that such changes take place in the nature of God, but that to speak thus is suited to our infirmity and slowness.¹¹

A traditional concern reflected in these statements by Augustine and Erasmus was to protect God's impassibility: God does not have changing human feelings. "Wrath" is God's judgment on sin, not anger. This concern perhaps implicitly underlies Calvin's discussion in the *Institutes*. But explicitly Calvin's concern has become one of practical theology, more akin to the mindset of Erasmus than Augustine: God really must have loved sinners even before the reconciliation in order to desire to save them, so the image of God as wrathful and hostile, an enemy, serves as a pedagogical device to impress sinners with the awesome meaning of their liberation from sin and to arouse gratitude for God's love revealed in Christ.

The particular "contradiction" which Calvin addresses with his understanding of accommodation is one which Augustine seems not to have felt. Nor is there any indication in Erasmus' annotations on the text that he was aware of any such contradiction.¹² In fact, both the Vulgate and Erasmus' Latin translation of Rom. 5:10 make sinful human beings the enemies, not God. Furthermore Calvin himself in his Latin commentary on the text passes over the whole problem, having read the text in the traditional way as "we were enemies."¹³

But when we turn to Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, a freer translation designed to interpret and explain the meaning more clearly, we find that Erasmus has done what Calvin was late to do in the *Institutes*, which is also a book intended for educational purposes. The paraphrase of Rom. 5:10 portrays a perception of God before the reconciliation in Christ as angry and hostile, but afterwards favorable and kind.¹⁴ Therefore when Calvin after 1543 in this context of the *Institutes* speaks of God as enemy, he is probably following Erasmus with the same reason in mind: to move the reader more profoundly to grasp the meaning of the incarnation.

The second metaphor chosen for our attention is God as mother, Calvin's use of female imagery for God. Recently historians have called attention to the existence of a strong early-church and medieval tradition of female metaphors for God and of the language of "Christ our Mother," especially

¹¹ *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive Collatio*, ed. Johannes von Walter (Leipzig: Georg Boehme, 1910), I a 11, p. 11; *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. E. Gordon Rupp, A. N. Marlow, Philip S. Watson, B. Drewery (Philadelphia, 1969), p. 41.

¹² Erasmus, *Opera omnia* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1705), 6, 584.

¹³ Com. Rom., C.O. 49, 94.

¹⁴ Erasmus, *Opera*, 7, 792.

among the mystics. Though these images are found perhaps most strikingly in Julian of Norwich, a late medieval English anchoress, their use is not at all limited to women's writings. Similar images can also be found in the writings of Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Anselm, and Bernard, for example,¹⁵ theologians whose work Calvin knew and respected. Some scholars are now beginning to wonder what happened to that tradition in the protestant reformation, but apparently no one has self-consciously attempted to document an answer to the question. In quite different contexts Ian Siggins has pointed out a few examples of Luther's use of female images, such as the mother hen protecting her chicks as Luther's favorite image of Christ¹⁶; and Richard Stauffer has noted Luther's image of God as a brooding hen at creation.¹⁷ These metaphors are undoubtedly derived from the early-church tradition.¹⁸ Nonetheless it is common for scholars to judge that the protestant insistence on "Scripture alone" resulted in the loss of female metaphors for God.¹⁹ Therefore a systematic probe into Calvin's way of working would help us begin to sketch some outlines of an answer to an intriguing question.

Since the theological presentation in the *Institutes* does not provide evidence of Calvin's interest in female images for God or Christ, we should assume that Calvin felt more comfortable with the dominantly male imagery of the Bible. Nevertheless, since he makes such a point of the propriety of using biblical images through which God has chosen to reveal Godself, and since there are in fact female images for God in the Bible, it would seem use-

¹⁵ See for example Caroline Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), chaps. 4, 5, and for earlier bibliography, pp. 110-11, n. 1-3; Jennifer P. Heimmel, *God Is Our Mother: Julian of Norwich and the Medieval Image of Christian Feminine Divinity* (St. John's University, Ph.D., 1980; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1981); Sister Ritamary Bradley, "Patristic Background of the Motherhood Similitude in Julian of Norwich," *Christian Scholar's Review* 8 (1978), pp. 101-13. I discovered the world of Heimmel and Bradley after having already completed my study of Augustine.

¹⁶ Ian Siggins, *Luther and His Mother* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 77-79. Siggins also discusses briefly Luther's use of passivity, receptivity, and sensuality as feminine aspects of his theology. For reasons of brevity, I have limited my discussion to explicitly female imagery. See Bynum, pp. 167-68, for a discussion of the problem of confusing the "female" and the "feminine"; "the latter may be an aspect of a person of either gender."

¹⁷ Richard Stauffer, *Interprètes de la Bible* (Paris, 1980), p. 65, n. 46.

¹⁸ The image of the hen and chicks will be discussed below. For patristic use of the brooding hen at creation in Augustine, see P.L. 34, col. 260, cited by Bradley, p. 103; for Abelard, P.L. 178, cols. 735-36, cited by Bynum, p. 140, n. 105.

¹⁹ For example, Eleanor L. McLaughlin, "Male and Female in Christian Tradition: Was there a Reformation in the sixteenth century?" in *Male and Female: Christian Approaches to Sexuality*, ed. Ruth Tiffany Barnhouse and Urban T. Holmes, III (NY: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 50: "Historically, the language and imagery of Protestant God-talk tended to come from the very male and patriarchal inheritance of the Old Testament rather than out of the medieval literature of religious experience mediated by women as well as men."

ful to explore how Calvin uses them. It would be helpful to know whether he explicitly supports or objects to their use or merely overlooks them.

We will examine first a group of Psalms from which female images for God had traditionally emerged, comparing Calvin's commentary with that of Augustine. We know that Calvin was very familiar with Augustine's commentary.²⁰ Then we will turn to a group of passages in Isaiah, this time comparing Calvin's commentary with that of Luther. Some linguistic parallels suggest Calvin may have known Luther's commentary; it had been published in Latin and would have been available to Calvin. Finally we will examine Luther's and Calvin's commentaries on Hosea 11, then Luther's commentary and a sermon by Calvin on Deuteronomy 32. Most of the passages use maternal imagery; for perspective, a few have been included which use other female metaphors for God.

The first psalm to be considered is Psalm 22, where the writer speaks of having been taken from the womb by God. Here God is pictured as a midwife. Augustine assumes Christ is speaking throughout the psalm, and that it is God's hand which drew him forth from the womb of Mary and of the Jewish race.²¹ Calvin recognizes the image of God as midwife, but he immediately turns to warm testimony about the miracle of birth and God's hand in the care of all children if they are to survive. As he talks of God's providential care, the image of God becomes that of a loving father.²²

In Psalm 31 Augustine translates verse 3 as "for thy name's sake thou wilt be my leader and nourish me." He then comments:

Here below, He who has promised us heavenly food has nourished us on milk, having recourse to a mother's tenderness. For just as a mother, suckling her infant, transfers from her flesh the very same food which otherwise would be unsuited to the babe (the little one actually receives what he would have received at table, but the food conveyed through the flesh is adapted to the child), so our Lord, in order to convert His wisdom into milk for our benefit, came to us clothed in flesh. It is the body of Christ, then, which here says, "And thou shalt nourish me."²³

This image of Christ as the nursing mother of the church is not unusual in the tradition. Calvin, however, omits all discussion of divine nourishment because he has retranslated the text, like today's RSV Bible, to read: "lead

²⁰ Luchsius Smits, *Saint Augustin dans l'oeuvre de Jean Calvin*, II (Assen, 1958), pp. 230-36.

²¹ En. in Ps., C.C. 38, 118, 126.

²² Com. Ps., C.O. 31, 226.

²³ En. in Ps., C.C. 38, 197; translation by Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan, *Saint Augustine on the Psalms*, ACW 30 (London, 1961), pp. 20-21; quoted by Heimmelp, p. 25.

me and guide me." In this case the female imagery disappears because it is no longer appropriate to the corrected reading of the text.²⁴

Psalm 102:6 is translated by Augustine as "I am like a pelican who lives in the wilderness." This gives Augustine the opportunity to see the pelican as the image of the Lord. Pelicans, he has heard, kill their own offspring and leave them in the nest for three days. Then the mother wounds herself and pours her own blood over the chicks to revive them. He sees in this sacrifice an image of Christ, who gave life through his blood, and who said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Mt. 23:37-38). Christ is then seen by Augustine as having both "paternal authority and maternal feeling, just as Paul is both father and mother" to the church.²⁵ When we turn to Calvin's commentary, we find once more that the female imagery has disappeared, this time because Calvin briefly notes that one cannot be certain what kind of bird is meant here.²⁶ Calvin does, however, retain in his commentary and sermons on Gal. 4:19 the image of the pastor as a mother feeding her children.²⁷

Psalm 123:2 speaks of our eyes looking to the Lord "as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress." For Augustine the master is our Lord and the mistress "our lady the wisdom [*sapientia*] of God."²⁸ Calvin merely remarks on the parallelism of the male and female servants and ignores the mistress as a metaphor for God. The point is the servants' dependence on the protection of the master, he thinks.²⁹

The image of the sheltering wings of God is common to Psalms 57, 61, and 91. Augustine simply refers to the security of shelter in the first two passages.³⁰ But in Psalm 91 he connects the sheltering wings to Christ's lament over Jerusalem which we have quoted, where Christ uses for himself the image of the hen and her chicks. Just as the hen makes herself weak brooding her chicks, Augustine says, "Because therefore we also were weak, the Wisdom of God [*sapientia*] made herself weak; because the Word [*verbum*] was made flesh and dwelt among us, so that we might hope under its wings."³¹ Calvin finds in Psalm 57's reference to the sheltering wings a reference to the hen and other birds sheltering their young, and he understands it to be an

²⁴ Com. Ps., C.O. 31, 300-1.

²⁵ En. in Ps., C.C. 40, 1430-32. On Paul, see I Cor. 4:15, Gal. 4:19.

²⁶ Com. Ps., C.O. 32, 63.

²⁷ Com. Gal., C.O. 50, 235; Serm. Gal., C.O. 50, 625-27.

²⁸ En. in Ps., C.C. 40, 1819.

²⁹ Com. Ps., C.O. 32, 308.

³⁰ En. in Ps., C.C. 39, 698 and 769.

³¹ En. in Ps., C.C. 39, 1258.

image of intimacy with which God familiarly invites believers to himself.³² Like Augustine, Calvin largely ignores the wings in Psalm 61:3.³³ But also like Augustine, he becomes eloquent in describing the sheltering wings of Psalm 91:4.

This figure, which is employed in other parts of Scripture, is one which beautifully expresses the singularly tender care with which God watches over our safety. When we consider the majesty of God, there is nothing which would suggest a likeness such as is here drawn between him and the hen or other birds, who spread their wings over their young ones to cherish and protect them. But, in accommodation to our infirmity, he does not regard it as a burden to descend, as it were, from the heavenly glory which belongs to him in order to encourage us more alluringly to approach him under so humble a similitude as that of a hen. Since he condescends in such a gracious manner to our weakness, surely there is nothing to prevent us from coming to him with the greatest freedom.³⁴

This sampling from the Psalms commentaries suggests that there is considerably less female imagery for God in Calvin's reading of the Bible than in that of Augustine. One might expect that Calvin's greater focus on the historical meaning of the text rather than on allegorical meanings, the result of his renaissance training, would explain this. But the change in these particular contexts can largely be attributed to Calvin's greater skill as a text critic and a Hebrew scholar: he does not retain from Augustine an interpretative tradition which has become irrelevant through text-critical or philological progress. Calvin also gives up the wisdom (*sapientia*) image which Augustine often used.

Where Calvin finds a female image for God in the biblical text which he accepts as genuine, he nearly always acknowledges it. Those metaphors which connote some degree of power, the midwife and mistress, are quickly dismissed, probably because of his assumptions about women's subordination. In the case of the midwife metaphor, the shift Calvin makes from the midwife to God the Father which seems so strange to a modern reader may also be related to the fact that in the early modern period male doctors were beginning to take over the work of the traditionally female midwives.

The female metaphor for God which Calvin finds deeply meaningful for his own theology is one of humility, that of the brood hen with her chicks,

³² Com. Ps., C.O. 31, 555.

³³ Com. Ps., C.O. 31, 582.

³⁴ Com. Ps., C.O. 32, 33; translation by James Anderson, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms by John Calvin* (Grand Rapids, 1949), III, p. 480, somewhat emended.

one which Augustine also particularly liked. Apart from this common preference, there seems to be little evidence of Calvin's dependence on Augustine in the way he interprets the particular texts we chose, despite his familiarity with Augustine's commentary.

When we turn to Calvin's commentary on Isaiah, we will make some comparisons with another commentary which comes out of the sixteenth-century context, Luther's commentary of 1527-30. It was published in Latin well before Calvin began to lecture on Isaiah in 1549. Though I cannot be certain that Calvin knew it, it was available to Calvin.

The passage in Isaiah 42:13-14 is useful because in the first verse God is spoken of as a man of war stirring up his fury; in the following verse God says he has restrained himself for a long time but will now "cry out like a woman in labor." Luther understands the man of war to be the Lord doing battle to establish his kingdom against all the adversaries who oppress it. "These are outstanding and highly dramatic words to console the godly, who see their enemies plot and clearly win the victory, just as our weak God is hard pressed by the Papists, Anabaptists, and Enthusiasts."³⁵ But the speaker shifts in the following verse to Luther himself. Luther's song of victory has become the wailing of a woman in labor. Yet the groaning announces birth, not death, and there will be singing and rejoicing again when God has conquered the enemies. Then the speaker again becomes Christ, no longer in humiliation but now in triumph.³⁶

In contrast with Luther's very personal appropriation of the text, Calvin gives a scholarly exposition of the role of metaphor here. The image of the warrior rushing forth is an accommodation to human capacity in order that believers will comprehend how much God cares about their affliction and oppression. Attributing to God human feelings like indignation leaves a more powerful impression on our minds, Calvin thinks. He also attends to the image of the woman in labor.

By this metaphor he [God] expresses astonishing warmth of love and tenderness of affection; for he compares himself to a mother who singularly loves her child, though she brought him forth with extreme pain. It may be thought that these things are not applicable to God; but in no other way than by such figures of speech can his ardent love towards us be expressed. He must therefore borrow comparisons from known objects, in order to enable us to understand those which are unknown to us; for God loves very differently from human beings, that is, more fully and perfectly, and

³⁵ W.A. 31-32, 318-19; translation in L.W. 17, 74.

³⁶ W.A. 31-32, 319-20.

although he surpasses all human affections, yet nothing that is disorderly belongs to him.³⁷

Christ is pictured here giving birth to the church, Calvin believes. As the text moves to God's announcement that he will devastate the land, Calvin explains:

Because that comparison of a laboring woman might somewhat degrade the majesty and power of God, the Prophet determined to add here a different feeling. So far then as relates to love, he says that God resembles a mother; so far as relates to power, he says that he resembles a lion or a giant.³⁸

Isaiah 46:3 reminds the people of Israel that they have been borne by God from their birth, carried from the womb, and that God will continue to carry them till old age. The contrast is with pagan gods which must be carried around by their human makers. Luther exclaims, "How could He speak more sweetly than in transferring a mother's experience to Himself. . . . 'Come to Me and I will carry you in My womb.' The uterus and womb of God is the divine Word, by which we are fashioned and borne."³⁹ Here Luther refers to Paul's descriptions of himself as father and mother, which we noted earlier in Augustine's commentary on the Psalms. Luther proceeds, "Let us just cling to the Word alone, and we shall have as our God a nursing mother and a bearer and a liberator from all evils."⁴⁰

Calvin in the same passage acknowledges that one could simply understand it to refer to God's parental caring for the infant from the time of birth. But since God begat the people spiritually, Calvin has no objection to understanding that they were brought forth out of the innermost parts of God.

If it be objected, that God is everywhere called "a Father," . . . and that this title is more appropriate to him, I reply, that no figures of speech can describe God's extraordinary affection towards us; for it is infinite and various; . . . In a word, the intention of the Prophet is to show that the Jews, if they do not choose to forget their descent, cannot arrive at any other conclusion than that they were not begotten in vain, and that God, who has manifested himself to be both their Father and their Mother, will always assist them . . . so that they ought not to pay homage to idols.⁴¹

³⁷ Com. Isa., C.O. 37, 68-70, translation by Pringle, III, p. 302, slightly altered.

³⁸ Com. Isa., C.O. 37, 70; translation by Pringle, III, p. 303, slightly altered.

³⁹ W.A. 31-32, 370; translation L.W. 17, 139.

⁴⁰ W.A. 31-32, 371; translation L.W. 17, 139, slightly altered.

⁴¹ Com. Isa., C.O. 37, 155; translated Pringle, III, 436-37, slightly altered.

A final passage from Isaiah is the assurance in 49:15 that God is even less likely to forget his people than a woman her sucking child. Luther notes that God uses the image of a woman as

especially designed for feeding, nourishing, and taking pity, as a man is designed for protecting and guarding. . . . A mother would be ready to go through fire for her children. So you see how hard women labor in cherishing, feeding, and watching. To this emotion God compares Himself, as if to say, "I will not forsake you, because I am your mother."⁴²

Calvin goes beyond Luther in asserting that a mother's love is an even stronger metaphor than a father's love. Otherwise he echoes Luther's description.

Thus he did not satisfy himself with proposing the example of a father (which on other occasions he very frequently employs) but in order to express his very strong affection, he chose to liken himself to a mother. . . . What amazing affection does a mother feel toward her offspring, which she cherishes in her bosom, suckles on her breast, and watches over with tender care, so that she passes sleepless nights, wears herself out by continued anxiety, and forgets herself!⁴³

Whereas in the Isaiah passages both Luther and Calvin were very responsive to the maternal imagery for God and very approving of it, in the remaining two passages we will examine, in Hosea and Deuteronomy, Luther passes over the opportunity to comment without appearing to notice the imagery. Hosea 11:3 is Jahweh's account of loving the child Israel, calling him out of Egypt, and teaching Ephraim to walk. The metaphor here is parental and could be understood entirely as God the Father. But Calvin makes clear that the metaphor could be that of a father, mother, or nurse leading the child. In this context he refers to the Deuteronomy 32 imagery of people carried on God's wings, or the eagle flying over her young ones,⁴⁴ introducing female metaphor not required by the biblical text.

Calvin's vernacular sermons on Deuteronomy 32 provide us with an opportunity to see whether Calvin is as free with female imagery while preach-

⁴² W.A. 31-32, 404-5; translated L.W. 17, 183. Noted by Siggins, p. 79.

⁴³ Com. Isa., C.O. 37, 204; translated Pringle, IV, pp. 30-31. Noted by John H. Bratt, "The Role and Status of Women in the Writings of John Calvin" in *Renaissance, Reformation, Resurgence* (Grand Rapids, 1976), pp. 5-6, as an "exceptional instance" of female imagery for God.

⁴⁴ Com. Hos., C.O. 42, 435. Luther, W.A. 13, 52. Jerome here sees only God the father, C.C. 76, 122.

ing to the laity as he is in his scholarly Latin commentaries. In fact he discusses at length the image of the eagle fluttering over her young, spreading out her wings and catching and carrying the chicks. He connects this image with the now familiar one of the hen and her chicks in Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, pointing out how proper it is for a majestic God to use such intimate, affectionate metaphors. In this way God's people will realize how stupid they are if they do not recognize God's loving care for them and give thanks and obedience, placing themselves under the hen's wings.⁴⁵

We have seen that both Calvin and Luther are conscious of female metaphors for God in the Bible, and they both feel that the use of those metaphors would be edifying to Christian people. Neither hedges them about with caution simply because they are female. Both assume that whatever manner God chooses to use to speak about Godself is absolutely proper and indeed purposeful. Both Luther and Calvin respond strongly to female imagery which fits the traditional stereotype of maternal nurture and protection of the young, like the hen and her chicks or the nursing mother, symbols for them of God's self-humiliation. This preference for stereotypical maternal images is consistent with the twelfth-century Cistercian tradition but not with that of late medieval women writers as described by Bynum.⁴⁶

On the basis of this particular sample of texts, Calvin seems more self-conscious than Luther about biblical imagery, repeatedly explaining the metaphorical nature of language about God. He appears to be even more sensitive to female imagery than Luther. Calvin believes that some people would mistakenly find it inappropriate to hear the Holy Spirit likening God to women in labor and brooding hens, so he carefully explains why such metaphors are useful. But he also is careful to explain the metaphorical nature of some male images for God.

To address the question with which we began our exploration of Calvin's use of female imagery for God, something remains in sixteenth-century protestantism of the medieval tradition of such language about God. The best-loved of those older images seems to be that of Christ the brooding hen gathering her chicks under her wings in intimate and affectionate protection, a biblical image which the medieval mystics also loved.

For the reformers the metaphors must be biblical to be approved. But even if they are biblical, Calvin, at least, is unlikely to use them except when he is working with a biblical text which in some way evokes them. They have not become a functional part of his systematic theology.

⁴⁵ *Serm. Deut.*, C.O. 28, 695-97. Luther, W.A. 14, 734.

⁴⁶ Bynum, pp. 131-32, 148-49.

These observations will have to be tested against a much broader sampling of reformation texts before any general conclusions can be drawn. At this point it simply appears that the biblical text which emerged from humanist scholarly circles of Calvin's day, bereft of its medieval meditative commentary, must have appeared to Calvin even more overwhelmingly male in its imagery for God than it had earlier appeared. In his attempt to focus on the historical meaning of a corrected biblical text, much traditional female imagery for God disappeared.

Even so, given Calvin's assertions that human knowledge of God would be incomplete without the variety of metaphors the Holy Spirit uses to reveal God's nature, it is very strange that he fails to discuss female metaphors for God in the *Institutes*, the textbook designed to help people read the Bible. There one finds traditional female metaphors for the church, the subordinate bride of Christ and the mother of believers, but not for Christ or God.⁴⁷

But Calvin is not alone among theologians of the middle ages and reformation in producing a systematic theology which is lacking in the very female images for God which are present in his biblical commentaries and more meditative spiritual writings.⁴⁸ One can read at length in Augustine's theological treatises without ever encountering the female imagery for God which we have been discussing in the biblical commentaries. Anselm, too, can speak affectionately and extensively of Jesus as mother in prayers and meditations,⁴⁹ yet one does not find that language in his more philosophically-oriented writings. In fact, in the *Monologion* Anselm explicitly argues that the father-son language is more appropriate to the relation of the Supreme Spirit and the Word—despite the fact that “each is truth and wisdom” (feminine nouns in Latin: *veritas* and *sapientia*) and “there is no sexual distinction” in them—than mother-daughter language, because “the first and principal cause of offspring is always in the father.”⁵⁰ Anselm believes that something in the very nature of inner-trinitarian relations demands the use of the terms Father and Son. This may help explain why the maternal language of devotion is lavished on the second person of the trinity, not the first.

⁴⁷ Inst. II, viii, 18, Inst. II, viii, 16, Inst. IV, i, 4.

⁴⁸ Bradley makes a similar point about Thomas Aquinas, pp. 110-11.

⁴⁹ For example, the often-quoted prayer from Anselm, prayer 10 to St. Paul, *Opera omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh, 1940-61), 3, pp. 33-41.

⁵⁰ *Monologion* 42; *Opera omnia* 1, 58. Noted by Bynum, p. 113; her judgment that Anselm also argues from natural male superiority needs to be tempered somewhat by Anselm's admission that there are exceptions to male dominance in nature, like some species of birds where the female is dominant. Yet the very nature of the exception he cites does suggest that he sees the argument for male superiority in nature as very strong. And of course the argument cited above is a particular form of male superiority in nature, as Anselm understands it.

We must ask whether Calvin also has a clearly articulated reason for avoiding in his systematic work what he freely admits are appropriate maternal biblical images. So far I have found no attempt by Calvin to argue as Anselm does for the inherent necessity to use male language for the first person of the trinity. In fact Calvin's explicit argument that both "mother" and "father" are biblical metaphors for God displaying different aspects of God's nature works against that. So does Calvin's disenchantment with Aristotelian physiology on which Anselm's argument depends.⁵¹

A more likely possibility is that Calvin is consciously avoiding the encouragement of popular religion which made considerable use of female imagery. Within catholicism Calvin objected to mariology and the cult of the saints, many of whom at the end of the middle ages were female. Outside catholicism there were contemporary radical popular religious movements using female imagery for God, such as the followers of Paracelsus.⁵²

Is the pervasive belief in the inferiority of women also behind Calvin's caution? Certainly. We have seen his awareness that people—probably including himself—are uneasy with female metaphors for God which connote humility as well as tender love. But Calvin is at least theologically somewhat more positive about the fulness of the image of God in women than his predecessors like Augustine who nonetheless freely used maternal language for God devotionally. There is some reason to believe Calvin hears the arguments of women writers of his day who aggressively defend women's rights and who at least sometimes themselves use female imagery for God.⁵³ And Calvin does defend in principle the appropriateness of female metaphors for God.

In conclusion, the two metaphors we have discussed, that of God as enemy and that of God as mother, diverse as they are, ultimately seem to have the same function in Calvin's theology. In both cases the metaphors are primarily pedagogical in function, not mystical. Their role is to help God's people grasp with their finite minds the awesomeness of God's love revealed in Christ and to respond gratefully to God in obedient service.

⁵¹ J. D. Douglass, *Women, Freedom, and Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 79-80.

⁵² See for example Arlene Miller Guinsburg, "The Counterthrust to Sixteenth-Century Misogyny: The Work of Agrippa and Paracelsus," *Historical Reflections* 8 (1981), pp. 3-28, esp. pp. 26-28.

⁵³ Douglass, chaps. 3-5; Katherine Zell is quoted as using the words of Isa. 49:15 and calling them "golden words" by Roland Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in Germany and Italy* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1971), pp. 61-63, cf. p. 69.

Theologies of Medicine: A Review Essay¹

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This is the second in a new series of essays intended to introduce readers to the literature of important disciplines or subjects.

IN A RECENT Jacques Cousteau odyssey, *Calypso* ventures to the Arctic Circle where the team films the remarkable behaviors and speech of those great beasts, the sea lions. We see a single dominant male spread out triumphantly on the ice floe while an entourage of affiliates splashes around in the icy blue water. Occasionally the others mount the ice block; often they are brushed away by a gesture. Still these pretenders to power assert their opportunities at least to test if the order of authority still maintains.

Today the two historic healing authorities over human existence, theology and therapeutics, for many centuries unified powers—then for a brief century alienated—have again initiated a vital dialogue. Not sure which is now the reigning sea lion, apprehensive that neither may be for long, conversation—sometimes cacophonous like that of Cousteau's Arctic friends—is heard.

Why has the priest-physician dialogue experienced this quiet resurgence in our day? The two developments which have made this renaissance possible are the clear recognition of the inadequacy of philosophy to fathom the depths of the great crises of meaning in birth, life, suffering, and death and the unprecedented theological dimensions of recent biotechnological power. Incisive philosophers who understand biomedical issues, Tris Engelhardt,

¹ Review of: Shelp, Earl. *Theology and Bioethics*. Boston: D. Reidel Publishers, 1985; Hauerwas, Stanley. *Suffering Presence*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1986; Nelson, James B. and Jo Anne Smith Rohricht. *Human Medicine*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishers, 1984; and May, William F. *The Physician's Covenant*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983.

Alasdair McIntyre, and Stephen Toulmin among others, have shown the severe limitations that the language of analytic philosophy faces in dealing with searching questions of life in extremis as it is impacted by biotechnology. At the same time the awesome reaches of that same technology have given us creative powers over body and mind, birth and death—indeed over human nature itself. As with Gilgamesh, Prometheus, or Adam and Eve, we find ourselves now at the gates of heaven and hell. The questions of the day are questions of ultimacy, questions of theology. An age that had grown accustomed to the Enlightenment ethos with its constitutive assumptions of the power of human reason, inevitable progress, and the death of God has now, in that very knowledge and progress come face to face with *Tremendum Fascinosum*: the Holy.

In an excellent overview article in the Shelp volume, Leroy Walters, director of the Kennedy Institute of Bioethics, traces the recent history of religion and the renaissance of medical ethics. While this essay neglects the many precursors of contemporary religio-medicine, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Orthodox Jewish medicine of the nineteenth century as just three of many examples, it does chronicle the rather dramatic flurry of activity that began in the late 1960s and has continued unabated for two decades.

The first set of essays in Shelp are unexpected and troubling. Rather than choosing scientific theologians to establish the credulity of theology for modern medicine, Shelp presents essays by philosophers (Hartshorne, Engelhardt, Franklin, and Mitchell) who are at best skeptical of theology's contribution. We might have wished for essays from the contemporary British (Oliver O'Donovan), German (Johannes Metz), or French (André Dumas) systematicians or their American counterparts (Rolf Ahlers, Larry Churchill) who grapple with biological issues to lay better foundations for a treatise on theology and bioethics. While I believe that critical philosophy has a vital contribution to make to theology in our day, one can scarcely imagine theology, or physics for that matter, being asked to establish the ground rules: criteria of language, meaning, and verification for a statement of the philosophy of medicine.

The contribution of the Shelp volume is to overview an important field of inquiry. The constructive essays by McCormick and Gilkey are particularly helpful as they exhibit the way in which traditional theology is gaining new vitality as it considers the developments of biomedicine. In addition to the Catholic and Protestant essays, Jewish and Islamic contributions would have been appreciated. In any case, it appears that the crisis of belief and value that modern intellectuals have experienced is at last being thrown into a new cre-

ative tension, perhaps even moving to new synthetic insight, as theology and science confront each other in unprecedented ways in the arena of biomedicine.

If Shelp provides an informative overview of this emerging synthesis, the volumes of Hauerwas, Nelson, and May develop classic theological motifs in the light of modern medical experience. The reader will find provocative and fresh renditions of the theologies of crucifixion, community, and covenant in these authors, respectively.

In a volume that takes one back to Jurgen Moltmann's *The Crucified God* and Kazoh Kitamori's *Theology of the Pain of God*, Hauerwas contemplates the moral art of medicine as suffering presence in the face of disease, debility, retardation, and death. He argues exquisitely that medicine is moral art and that suffering is moral act. In this, the most powerful passage in the volume, he argues that if any meaning at all is to be imputed to pain, it must be that the pain of human suffering is part of the moral burden of hurt in the heart of the world. Medicine and healing care are the central forces in an assault of courage against this demonic residue within the creation.

But the resistance of medicine to the burden of suffering is itself problematic. Hauerwas goes so far as to question the fundamental ambition of biomedicine to alleviate suffering. Drawing on the pivotal insight of Christianity that reality is cruciform and that redemptive suffering lies at the axis and apex of creation, Hauerwas contends that "without allowing ourselves and others to suffer we could not be human or humane" (p. 25).

While not accepting the rationalization that suffering is punishment or that it is enobling, Hauerwas does allow that "the cross provides a pattern of interpretation which allows one to locate the pointlessness of suffering without a cosmic framework" (p. 31). Years of clinical involvement have convinced me that the anguish of perinatal crisis, the strains to be well and flourish through life's course, gaining all the while one gives way into death, all indeed are human experiences that touch the infinite and participate in that birth of new creation that is occurring in our world. Only a theology of cruciform creation can save us from the new politics of biotechnology which believe unequivocally that defect is absurd and therefore must be eliminated. In moving fashion, Hauerwas develops his practical refutation of this idolatrous mania in the final chapters on "Caring for the Handicapped."

Just as the compassionate fellowship arises out of the pathos theology of Hauerwas, Jim Nelson and Jo Anne Rohricht point to communal responsibilities and supports as the essence of the ethical charter of patient care. This enlarged new edition of what has become a standard textbook will take an

important place not only in the teaching literature used by students of medicine and nursing but also on the shelf of important theological works about medicine. After an orienting chapter on the meaning of health, the authors review issues and persuasions of the themes of abortion, human experimentation, reproductive technology, genetics, dying, transplantation, and the delivery of medical care.

The strength of Nelson's and Rohricht's approach is found in the first and last chapters as these frame the intervening illustrative chapters. As soon as we pause to reflect on the question "what is health?" we find we are dealing with transcending questions. Health transcends the individual beyond into the community. It transcends the temporal and physical beyond into the eternal and spiritual. Health and health care are "congregational" phenomena. We draw together to stimulate and restore life and health in one another. As a body politic we confer obligations and rights which define our reciprocal dealings with one another in health and disease. When life gets tough, as it inevitably does for all, we fall on the burden-bearing and upholding strengths of one another.

The virtue of *Human Medicine's* approach is illustrated in the chapter on "Care of the Dying." A human person can die positioned anywhere on a continuum between the poles of "aloneness" and "togetherness." "Grace" in dying is not found in damnable isolation nor in being "at the mercy of others." It is found in "cooperating with the patients dying." If we are to avoid being victimized by the disgrace of abandonment on the one hand or technologically mediated death management at the hands of the collectivity on the other, we will need to discover those styles of mutual responsibility that honor the person. Such have always distinguished "Human Medicine."

This covenantal quality of care for the sick and dying is the essential commitment of a redemptive community and the *leitmotif* of the finest theological statement on the medical art published in recent years. Bill May deals forthrightly with the deeper theological currents of medicine, currents that are all but submerged in the more prevalent casuistic and legalistic treatments of medical ethics. May deals honestly with malevolence and human sin as this is expressed in the arrogance, ambition, and avarice of physicians. With great sympathy he deals with guilt and shame, fallibility and finitude. Indeed all of the frailty and power of the physician is gathered into this masterful analysis. With a poetic stroke that has always distinguished May's writing, he considers the image of physician as parent, fighter, technician, teacher, and covenanter. There is virtue and vice in each mask, each persona. Each image emerges in history as an indispensable feature of the professional

art. Each also carries a certain risk and danger. This is not surprising since the original notion of covenant in the Hittite culture and in the ancient Orient has a harsh side as well as a gracious invitation (*gebot/angebot*). The genius of this work is its subtle blending of personal virtue ethics and professional deontology all placed within the institutional context.

These are four unique and very helpful volumes that will enrich the perspectives of all who minister in the health fields and indeed ultimately all of us, since none of us is untouched by these profound concerns. Like those colossal sea lions, some great lumbering creature is on the move in our midst. Be the final coming frightful or delightful we know that we shall meet something fascinating. Medicine has opened again the gates of the sacred which includes the demonic. These four volumes help us track the meanderings of those Leviathans.

In the words of W. B. Yates:

and what rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born.²

² M. L. Rosenthal, "The Second Coming," in *Selected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1962), p. 9.

Christians, Jews, and the Covenant: A Conversation Between God and God's Confidante

by ELIZABETH G. EDWARDS

A native of White Plains, New York, Elizabeth G. Edwards received her education at Middlebury College, Union Theological Seminary (New York), Cheshnut College, Cambridge, England, and Princeton Theological Seminary. She joined the faculty of Princeton Seminary in New Testament in 1970. This paper is related to her participation in a theological seminar on "Christians, Jews, and the Covenant" held in Jerusalem in January 1987. The seminar was sponsored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews in conjunction with the Shalom Institute for Advanced Judaic Studies.

SCENE: A wall-less room (the paradox of which befits the nature of the Occupant) of infinite limits. Clouds of varying colors move in and out—white-as-snow white, realistic gray, rainbow-colored (like Joseph's cloak; seamless, of course, as well), and black with fuming flames spewing out at periodic intervals, often turning the blackness into beautiful hues of sunset colors. There is one object: a throne, made of wood—ornately plain and plainly ornate.

TIME: Now—which for there could be then.

CHARACTERS: God—who plays no part and whose part no one succeeds in playing; and God's Confidante—also nameless, but from whom flows sounds like the rushing wind creating where it blows.

SPECIAL NOTE: Despite the form of this report, the language being spoken is wordless—in order to be Word. It is neither Chinese nor Ethiopic, Latin nor Aramaic, English nor Greek, Hebrew nor American; it is without words—but neither silent nor formless; it is complete and full—voidless in its lack of words, in order to avoid all the pitfalls of words—the violence and the abuse; the hurt and the misunderstanding; the hypocrisy and the cruelty; the inadequate translation and the invalid transfer. But it is a language, for communication is taking place; it is not the body language we humans use 80% of the time, for the Characters are without bodies as we know such. It is language, however, for communication is real; no one is in the dark; comprehension reigns—two can think as one yet be two in their oneness.

GOD: Now, that's interesting. . . .

CONFIDANTE: Which that is that?

GOD: The problem they're working on this coming year.

CON: What problem and who are the "they"?

GOD: The "they" is the NCCJ—you know, one of those few groups that try to share me rather than divide me; and the problem is the one they'll be spending next January on, in my Holy City.

CON: What kind of problem is worthwhile yet could be solved in a month?

GOD: Well, they don't claim they'll solve it—they realize the solving is in the struggling. The problem concerns ME.

CON: Which thing about you?

GOD: How I deal with my peoples—funny how jealous most of my people can be.

CON: What do you mean "jealous"?

GOD: Let me put it this way. Let's say I choose one human being to be special to me, to have a special relationship of responsibility.

CON: But don't all human beings have that with you?

GOD: Potentially, of course; a "given" in creation. But I mean more and other than that.

CON: Okay. Excuse the interruption; do go on.

GOD: Suppose I choose one. Just about the same moment that that human being recognizes her/his belongingness and begins to respond in awe and gratitude, possessiveness sets in and the quality of the belongingness becomes marred.

CON: Even when you choose a community? Yet, maybe so; but how do you mean really?

GOD: They try to limit my love and squeeze it down to their size—a real pity.

CON: But can't they see how infinite your love must be or they wouldn't have been chosen by you in the first place?

GOD: Sounds logical to you, but no, not really. You know how they all have distorted my original intention for them. They think too highly of themselves—or else they think too little—that varies with circumstances, and even differs according to sex, I've been noticing recently.

CON: Fascinating! So they're not too consistent, then, I gather?

GOD: Right, but if they were, they'd be creator not creature, and there's only room for one of them.

CON: So, they get jealous, you were saying. You mean, they become fearful that you don't really love *them* and find *them* special if you choose someone else as well, is that it?

GOD: Yes, that's exactly it! You'd think you'd been inside their mind and heart, the way you know them!

CON: I've had some practice.

GOD: But there's more. I think it's not just that they're afraid and threatened and don't trust my love enough; they really—when you come down to it—don't love their fellow human beings enough. If they did, they'd want what was best for them, and they know *I* am. Why can't they respond to love with love? I'll have to ask myself that question some day and discuss it.

CON: So tell me more about this particular problem they're addressing. Are they dealing with it scientifically or biologically or psychologically or historically or theologically or what?

GOD: Oh, theologically, of course. True, it's the hardest way, but it's the only way also. Not their fault, really, if they get bogged down in their own feeble attempts, no matter how well intentioned, to understand me. It's not their fault—and yet it is. They know enough about me to know they can't encapsule me! They know I won't even let them *name* me—if and when they do, it's only for convenience. But it's my *being* and my *moving into the future* that I am; not my name, and any connotations they use to try to control me or hold on to me by connecting those connotations with that name—which name is not.

CON: I wonder—are they dumb or stubborn? Sometimes I'm not sure.

GOD: I appreciate your dilemma. I switch back and forth—or maybe they do.

CON: The problem—back to that. Please be specific.

GOD: It relates to covenants. There has been a lot of confusion and narrow-mindedness about the covenants I have made, covenants with the Jews and a covenant with the Christians. It seems that Jews often think that the covenants with them preclude any with the Christians, and the Christians often think that the covenant with them abrogates any with the Jews. Funny, isn't it, how they have to figure everything out.

CON: But you know very well you yourself promote that, not just the mind you gave them but the whole complex way you have had of dealing with them; you must admit you applaud their trying to figure out life and death and all the in-between's, so why aren't you pleased they're trying to work out this one?

GOD: I guess it disturbs me that their minds are quite as narrow as they are. All that gray matter was created for expansion and flexibility. Granted I never chose either the Jews or the Christians FOR their openmindedness, but I did rather hope such an outgrowth would be forthcoming from the choosing itself.

CON: A bit optimistic of you, perhaps. But it sounds to me as if both sides—please pardon the term—don't comprehend what the concept of a covenant is—not to speak of its function—for them and for history.

GOD: I was thinking the same thing (leaning down from the throne and looking between the clouds to the spinning earth below). I wonder (with a pondering look) which would have proved less problematic: creating them with no freedom or with no language, no verbal language? It's an eternal debate for me.

CON: No verbal language. You mean like us? Created in our image?

GOD: Well, yes, in a sense. But I did, didn't I—or we?

CON: True enough. I remember well. A memorable week, to speak mildly. But aren't you speaking an impossibility even for you? A human being without freedom would not be a human being; and a human being without language would not know he or she were one, so what would be the point?

GOD: I see your point. It's simply that I become so frustrated over their insistence on blurring symbol and reality. If only they had the depth of understanding and insight and compassion and vulnerability not to need words for conveying meanings to each other, but they don't—not yet. A flaw in the manufacturing, perhaps.

CON: I'm not sure I agree with you there.

GOD: Well, it doesn't matter. What I mean is, if they could only learn to appreciate more fully the tremendous and beautiful power of language, but to use it to expand and enlighten, and not pervert it into the reality it seeks to express. They cause themselves—us too, for that matter—so much unnecessary grief.

CON: I'm not fully following you. How does language relate to the covenants/covenant problem?

GOD: It's rather like mistaking a sign of a covenant for the actuality of it—from rainbows to sprinkled water. But take even the word "covenant" itself. Its meaning has become so distorted. Perhaps first I should have covenanted with them to understand and not misunderstand what any covenant with them would mean—what it would imply and what it would not imply.

CON: Was "covenant" the best word you could think of for the reality of the relationship it was describing and defining?

GOD: Probably not, but they've done worse with it than I expected. They even mislaid what the origin of the Hebrew word was. Some think it relates to cutting, and so maybe to a sacrifice. Some think it relates to binding, and so to conditions and rules and self-limiting participation. And some admit they don't know.

CON: Well, which of these is correct?

GOD: Come now, you know the answer.

CON: True, but I just wanted to hear you explain it again; that helps me grasp and retain it, and it might help how I illuminate it too.

GOD: And then the Greek language—or those seventy or so alleged translators—they would choose a word related to endings, not beginnings. Why would “put through” ever come to have that meaning anyway? Granted, disposing of one’s belongings at death is some sort of agreement, but it’s misleading; I want to share my riches while alive, and I have no plans for dying anyway—it’s not down there in the stars for me. Besides, *my* “will” is always in effect, granted temporary, mysterious, apparent suspensions.

CON: I think you’re getting off on a tangent.

GOD: No, not really. Back to “*diathēkē*”: Granted life and death sometimes were the options in my covenants, but the Greek-speaking Jews could have opted for a more appropriate word. I guess by then the etymology of “*berith*” had disappeared from view.

CON: The *what*? “Etymology”? Sounds like a study of bugs.

GOD: What’s wrong with you? Don’t you know your roots?

CON: Please go on.

GOD: I was saying, they should have coined a new word rather than have borrowed an old one. Sure, it allowed the Apostle Paul to do some clever punning, but getting those puns across in anything but Greek is tough.

CON: How about the English? Was that a step in the right direction?

GOD: Indeed it was, as a matter of fact. Thanks to the French, that is, because a covenant is that through which my people and I “come together.” A covenant demonstrates that we have come together, in some sort of mutually acknowledged agreement. No, it’s really not such a bad choice of word.

CON: The trouble is it makes it sound as if two parties simply will to come together, to join forces, so to speak; the word doesn’t take into account your initiative.

GOD: But isn’t that a given? What am I going to do, be the follower? Of course God initiates and my people respond. And I set the terms—but they willingly agree to them.

CON: But you haven’t always had terms *per se*, have you?

GOD: Sometimes the terms are no terms, the condition of no conditions. That’s often the most difficult and frustrating for my people. They want to be doing something, Jew and Christian—receiving is hard for them; of course, giving is as well. But I am GRACE and what I do flows from who I am. So I deal at the deepest level in terms of *grace* with my people—my peoples.

CON: But what about the Law?

GOD: That's a tough one. You see, the giving of the law was in itself a gracious act. Yes, I expect it to be obeyed; it's not just there, carved in stone, for fun or futility. But whether obedience is truly ultimately possible has not been resolved yet, in a sense. You see, I like open-endedness. Questions that are too easily settled lead to self-complacency, boredom, and arrogance. My peoples are not to be that way.

CON: It seems to me that the real problem lies in the issue of promises.

GOD: Promises? Yes, I've made promises with my peoples, covenantal promises—some fulfilled, some to come, some a bit of both.

CON: No, actually I don't mean that. I mean: Did you ever promise your protos people that you would never make a covenant with anyone else? Was it like a marriage vow of exclusivity?

GOD: Of course not. I bind myself into reliability, in order to free myself. I wouldn't—couldn't—limit myself the way you mean, or the future.

CON: Then what makes the Jews think no other covenants with any others are possible?

GOD: It's a Messiological misunderstanding. That's the key. How do covenant and Messiah—promise and fulfillment, expectations and unexpectedness—all dovetail together into a meaningful, flowing whole? Where's the resolution for all the tensions among them? I hope someone will be approaching the problem from that angle.

CON: But there's another matter. Wasn't one of your promises to your protos people that your desires and plans for all humanity would be fulfilled through them?

GOD: Yes, you're right and that's right. It has been and will be. But what does "through" mean? Active or passive? Expense or expanse?

CON: But if the Jews don't see the Cross as the symbolic, yet actualizing-in-itself act of a new covenant, why or how do the Christians so see it?

GOD: Jesus, called my Son, saw his ministry and death in that light; to him the giving of his life was an enactment of a new covenant. "This cup is. . . ." Do you know I hear those words of his echoed constantly, from one spot down there or another? And he was right so to see it—but his own people are right too.

CON: How can that be?

GOD: But don't *you* see? If *you* don't understand, you best take January 1987 off and do some learning and growing and expanding and reflecting and appropriating and awakening.

CON: For me it would be easy to understand both points of view if I were

involved in these discussions and that learning experience, but what I sincerely question is how either of those so-called groups can comprehend the issue from the other's point of view. What I mean is, if each side or group feels like an outsider to the other's covenantal experience, then how can any mutual understanding and acceptance take place? It seems to me it'd be presumptuous either to declare a perspective that misunderstands OR to presume a perspective that understands.

GOD: Exceedingly perceptive of you. But that's the whole point of the program.

CON: Will anything come of it—or will all be futility, futility, all futility?

GOD: Now, don't become ecclesiastical on me! Or cynical for that matter. Of course a positive outcome will take place, because the very desire of any to dialogue and join in this enterprise promises good fruits. The conceiving of the program begins with the long stride—and many strides will follow, I promise.

CON: Any idea where the greatest obstacles will lie?

GOD: Yes, I keep my ears open. The stumbling block—not counting the law problem I'm credited with placing in their path—used to be “Who's responsible for Jesus' death? Are the Jews responsible for that Jew's death?” Blessedly much ground has been covered in that area, and that point is not so frequently used as a rationalization for silence or stalemate.

CON: Not to speak of all the other uses such rationalization has resulted in.

GOD: Yes. I WAS there—at Auschwitz—but that pain I can't bear right now. Let's go back to the more philosophical points. As I was saying, I think now the greatest problem or obstacle to mutual understanding concerns the *land*.

CON: The *land*?

GOD: Yes. THE land. The LAND. I promised my people land in my covenant with them through Their Father. And my “other” people cannot seem to come to terms with the concreteness of this promise, not to speak of its specificity.

CON: Why is that, I wonder?

GOD: They can't seem to grasp its absolute significance. They are not a “people” in the same sense that my protos people are. Sure, all peoples and persons need and deserve land, but my people have a particular need for land—and you might say I have a need to gift them with it. They are my people—protos people, yes, but and thus *my people*.

CON: If your other people weren't promised land, did you promise something comparable?

GOD: Yes—but so different. I promised them (not my first such promise) my Spirit. Well, you should know all about that!

CON: You mean Spirit of land? That's quite a pair! And quite a contrast!

GOD: Not really if you think about it; I wish they all would. The Spirit too is life-giving, and the source or confirmation of identity—a so-called visible expression of my formation of them into the particular people and of my ownership of them.

CON: Did you fulfill that promise? Pardon me for asking.

GOD: I did and I have—yet I didn't and haven't. That is, not in a way that they can feel they possess or own or control that promise—that Spirit. That would be absolutely contradictory to the Spirit's nature, you know that. It's in a way like the yes and no of my land promise fulfillment.

CON: But surely *their* ownership is legitimate?

GOD: Yes, but tragically it isn't clearcut. Exceedingly complicated, I assure you. So much confusion and fighting and conflict. And to think that SHALOM is supposed to be the product of my covenanting ways. At times even I am mystified by the incomprehensibility of what I do and how I do it.

CON: But isn't the REAL point that you are FREE to do what and as you wish?

GOD: Yes, to me that is the real and basic point, as long as what I do flows out of who I am—and for me it would have to—intrinsic it is to my being.

CON: And who are you then?

GOD: Even *you* ask that?

CON: I mean, in terms of actions flowing from your being, WHO are you?

GOD: Faithful first of all—faithful and reliable. And I am righteous, that word that is so ambiguous because I define it more than it defines me. I expect a lot yet allow a lot. I'm merciful and loving, compassionate and loyal.

...

CON: Sounds like a "hesed" entry to me.

GOD: And what's wrong with that?

CON: Nothing, of course, since we're talking covenant talk. I was simply amused.

GOD: It would be my good pleasure if my peoples could see all their history and all my deeds in this light—in light of my faithful love for them and for *all* my creation AND my essence-bound freedom. Nothing but understanding would or could then ensue, I am sure!

CON: Isn't that an oversimplification?

GOD: Not really. Sometimes I smile at all their theologizing, but sometimes

it makes me angry—even suffer—to witness their virtuous yet self-righteous attempts to comprehend me; they come at it from their own end and with their own ends in mind.

CON: But how else?

GOD: From mine, of course.

CON: Then why don't you let them?

GOD: Then why don't they do it?

CON: At times even I find you inscrutable.

GOD: We are what we are.

CON: So, you're going to fall back on the old "it's a mystery" solution, are you?

GOD: Yes and no. The solution to this entire problem is in coming—in the coming—to that "it's a mystery" profession of faith. The solution isn't the arrival or that sentence itself.

CON: You mean the statement isn't the answer but the path to it is?

GOD: Said rather well!

CON: Your influence rubs off on me. Proximity to you pays off, believe me.

GOD: Thank you. I think we relate and commune rather well myself.

CON: But back to the "mystery" solution a moment. Tell me: Is there one path to it and does that path have an end?

GOD: Exactly, good for you! I mean, your very question shows you know the answers—"no" and "no."

CON: This discussion (speaking in a pleased tone of voice, albeit somewhat proudly) with ourselves has proved most enlightening to me.

GOD: So, you don't think you'll have to sign up—apply rather—for the theological seminar?

CON: No, I'd rather not enroll—my credentials are rather fuzzy—but I'll be there.

GOD: I know you'll be there.

CON: I'll be there, yes. With you, for you, however we might put it.

GOD: Yes, in my Holy City—in the questions, in the attitudes, in the dialoguing, in the disagreements, in the agreements—I'll be there, in the midst of my peoples.

CON: Where have I heard that before? Somewhere in the past four thousand years, or is it four days? I sometimes get mixed up. But that doesn't matter. I trust what you say. I trust you—we'll be there.

BOTH: Yes, *next year* . . . Jerusalem.

Jesus' Final Exam

by THOMAS G. LONG

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Text: *There came to him some Sadducees, those who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, saying, "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, having a wife but no children, the man must take the wife and raise up children for his brother. Now there were seven brothers; the first took a wife, and died without children, and the second and third took her, and likewise all seven left no children and died. Afterward the woman also died. In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife will the woman be? For the seven had her as wife." And Jesus said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage; but those who are accounted worthy to attain to that age and to the resurrection from the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die any more, because they are equal to angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to him." And some of the scribes answered, "Teacher, you have spoken well." For they no longer dared to ask him any question (Luke 20:27-40).*

I AM NOT SURE that the students who are here this morning would agree with this, but I believe I am right about this one. As a teacher I have discovered that the most difficult part of an examination—a test—is not providing the correct answers, but asking the right questions. The questions on a test can turn out to be tricky, when we teachers intended them to be straightforward, vague when we were striving for clarity, or easy-as-pie when we were attempting to create a challenge. It is well known that students are openly terrified they are going to give dumb answers; it is not as well known

that we teachers are secretly terrified we are going to ask stupid questions.

I heard recently about a geology professor at another university who was writing a question for his final exam. I am sure he was intending for the students to answer this question with the names of various minerals and rock formations, because the question he asked was: "Name three things which are found on the earth which are not found on the moon." But one of the students, knowing a silly question when he saw it, responded, "Roller skates, Bruce Springsteen, and the Republican Party." As I said, the most difficult part of any examination is asking the right questions.

And there is a deeper and broader sense in which this is true. Asking the right questions is difficult not only because the questioner might slip up and ask a dumb question, but also because every question we ask reveals something important about ourselves. Questions are not morally or intellectually neutral, and every time we ask a question, whether it's teacher to student, police to suspect, parent to child, or friend to friend, we reveal our own assumptions about our convictions about what is important, our notions of truth, our own angles of vision, our biases, our concerns, and our limitations. Contained in the question is the assumed world of the questioner.

In his popular book *Between Parent and Child*, Haim Ginott told of Andy, a ten-year-old boy, who asked his father, "What is the number of abandoned children in Harlem?"

His father, a chemist and an intellectual, was pleased by his son's curiosity and responded with a long lecture on the topic. He then looked up the figure.

Andy, however, was not satisfied. "What is the number of abandoned children in New York City?" "in the United States?" "in Europe?" "in the world?"

Finally the father realized that his son was not concerned about a social problem; he was concerned about being abandoned himself. He was not looking for statistics, but for reassurance.¹ In the question is the assumed world of the questioner.

You can see this relationship between question and assumption at work in our text today. This is a story about a question some religious leaders, the Sadducees, asked Jesus. In fact, the twentieth chapter of Luke contains a series of questions put to Jesus, each question trickier than the previous one. The twentieth chapter of Luke could be seen as Jesus' final rabbinical exam. And as in all exams, the ones asking the questions are being tested as fully as the one who is questioned.

¹ Haim G. Ginott, *Between Parent and Child* (New York: Avon Books, 1965), pp. 21-22.

The last, and most difficult, question they asked Jesus was this: Suppose there was a woman who married a man who had six brothers. The man unfortunately dies before they are able to have any children. Now the scripture, the Law of Moses, is clear about this. One of the brothers must take the widow as *his* wife so they can have children and continue his brother's line. So, brother number one steps forward and marries the woman. But, alas, he dies, too, before children are born, so brother number two steps forward. He dies, too. Then comes brother three, four, and so on. All die. Then she dies. There are eight funerals, but no children. Now, here's the question: In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?

This is a trick question in multiple choice form. Jesus can choose A or B. If he chooses A, he picks one of the husbands: In the resurrection she will be the wife of, say, her first husband—or of her last husband. It doesn't matter, really. The point is that Jesus, in choosing A selects *one* of them, and the problem with choice A is that it's virtually indefensible. She was equally the wife of all seven brothers. A won't work—so that leaves B. Jesus can choose B, and this is the one the Sadducee questioners secretly hope he will be forced to choose. B is: You got me there fellows; she can't be the wife of all of them in the resurrection; she can't be the wife of only one of them in the resurrection, so *reductio ad absurdum*, there must be no resurrection.

This is a trick question in which Jesus is given two equally unacceptable choices. He has to choose A—or B. But Jesus surprises his questioners: He chooses . . . C. Which is to say, he doesn't *answer* the question; he *challenges* it. In the question is the assumed world of the questioner, and Jesus calls that world into question.

What is the world assumed in the question? To begin with there is the assumption that, if there is a resurrection, the woman will *belong* to somebody in it. A first-century husband had something like property rights over a wife, and this woman had belonged to seven men in her life, so the only question is, Which one will she belong to in the resurrection? In the question is the assumed world of the questioner, and in that world the woman is some man's possession. As Justo and Catherine Gonzalez point out, "For all intents and purposes, the story could have been about seven brothers who successively inherited a cow from each other."²

In her book *Jesus According to a Woman*, Rachel Wahlberg observes that, by challenging this assumed world, Jesus' response creates a new and gracious world for the woman. She writes,

² Justo L. and Catherine G. Gonzalez, *Liberation Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1980), p. 65.

A woman hears Jesus declaring that she is not someone's property, that she has equal status in the resurrection, that she has a position not relative to anyone else. . . . At least in heaven she will not achieve her status through someone else.³

In a larger sense the question Jesus was asked assumes that God's future is simply an extension of what we can see, do, and understand in the present. God's future is merely "more of the same." She was somebody's wife in the present, and it follows logically that she will be somebody's wife in the future. In short, the assumed world of the question is closed to the possibility that God's future might be radically new, radically different from the present constraints on human life. But Jesus does not answer the question; he goes behind the question to challenge the assumption. "In this age people marry; but in that age, the age to come, they do not. In this age people die; in the age to come there is no death. In this age people are children of pain and suffering; in the age to come they are children of the resurrection . . . children of God. The age to come is radically new; it is not more of the same."

There is a church I know which formed, several years ago, a committee on hunger. When the committee got together to discuss the issue of hunger, the members were struck by the sheer size of the hunger problem in their city. Many in the city were hungry, and the committee was forced to ask the question, "What can we possibly do about a hunger problem of such magnitude?" Now notice, the assumed world of the questioner is in the question: What can *we* do about the problem of hunger?

Nonetheless, several projects were launched, including a special hunger offering to be taken on the last Sunday of every month. People were to march forward during the singing of the final hymn to place their gifts in baskets, and the money would be spent to alleviate hunger in the city. This program was a great success; thousands and thousands of dollars were given—more than anyone dreamed. But as the months wore on, there was discouragement. Some of the money was misused by the agencies to which it was given. Some was unaccounted for, and, most of all, it was difficult to see any real impact from the program. People were being fed, to be sure, but the lines of hungry people only got longer. In short, for all of their efforts to make a dent in the problem of hunger, every tomorrow looked just like another today—more of the same.

³ Rachel Conrad Wahlberg, *Jesus According to a Woman* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), p. 44.

One Sunday, however, during the time for the hunger offering, something unusual happened. People were coming forward bringing dollar bills, envelopes with checks; children marched down with dimes and quarters. Suddenly a woman whom no one recognized got up from her pew and moved toward the basket in the front. She was not very well dressed and she carried no offering in her hand. When she got to the basket, she paused for a moment, folded her hands, and prayed. That was it; she had no money to place in the basket. She had only a prayer. The prayer was her offering, but it was something else as well. It was a visible reminder to all who saw that their gifts were not solutions to the problem of hunger in the city; they were, in their own way, prayers for God to bring in a new age. The woman's action challenged the assumption that gifts to feed the hungry are wasted unless they somehow "solved" the problem of hunger. The offerings were, rather, signs of the new age, the age which will arrive not because we make it come, but because God is bringing it to be.

Most of the religious questions we know how to ask are too small and too narrow:

In the resurrection, whose wife will she be? A or B?

How can we put an end to hunger? What are the solutions?

Why do bad things happen to good people? Give me some reasons.

What is God's will for me today? This or that?

These are not evil questions; they are simply shortsighted questions. In such questions there are the assumptions of the questioners, namely that our questions have answers which can be woven out of the possibilities we can see, responses forged from the circumstances we can touch. Choose one—either A or B.

The hard news is that neither A nor B is correct. The good news is that on the other side of our questions there is not an answer, but there is God, who makes all things new, who brings a future more redemptive than we can imagine.

Much about the life of Charles de Gaulle is well known. What is not so widely known is that Charles and Evonne de Gaulle were the parents of a Downs Syndrome child. She was a treasure to them; she was a concern for them. Regardless of what was occurring in the affairs of state, Charles arranged his life so that he and Evonne would have some time almost every day with their infant daughter. When they would put her to bed, and the child had fallen asleep, Evonne would often ask, "Oh Charles, why couldn't she have been like the others?"

As had been predicted by the physicians, the de Gaulle's daughter died in her youth. There was a private, graveside Mass, and when the priest had pronounced the benediction, all present began to leave the grave—except for Evonne. In her grief, she could not pull herself away. Charles went back to her, gently touched her on the arm, and said, "Come, Evonne. Did you not hear the blessing of the priest? She is now like the others."

"In this age," Jesus said, "people marry, are given in marriage, and die." In this age people shiver through the night with no place to call home, find themselves deprived of human dignity, and perish from loneliness. That is the way it is in this age. In this age people have to make answers for their questions out of the materials at hand—either A or B. "But in that age," Jesus goes on to say, and by so saying points toward an age not governed by the captivities of this age. The promise of the gospel is that the possibilities for human life are not contained in the assumptions of "this age." Because, by the grace of God, there is "that age," "this age" loses its power to condemn. Even now God's new age is gathering us into its embrace, setting us free, and claiming us as God's own sons and daughters.

Magnificat

by JUDITH E. SANDERSON

Judith E. Sanderson is an assistant professor of Old Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary. She has received degrees from Covenant College, the University of Heidelberg (Germany), Covenant Theological Seminary, the Institute of Holy Land Studies (Jerusalem), and the University of Notre Dame. She is the author of An Exodus Scroll from Qumran and several articles. This sermon was preached in Miller Chapel on December 15, 1986.

SOME PASSAGES in the Bible are so well known that we can't hear what they say anymore. That can be especially true of the passages that are Advent and Christmas favorites, including the familiar words of the Magnificat. There are two things that we can do to try to hear these texts with new ears, and they both have to do with our imaginations. First, we can imagine the speaker in a new way. Second, we can imagine our own roles in the text in a new way. Please join me in this twofold experiment of the imagination as we consider Luke 1:47-55.

How do we imagine the singer? Isn't she a mild, softspoken girl, a sweet young thing who sang in a soft soprano or a gentle alto, quietly, soothingly, as a lullaby while she was rocking her baby to sleep? Isn't she a docile person who talked with angels in King James English, saying things like "Behold, I am the handmaiden of the Lord. Be it unto me as thou hast spoken"? We know this quiet, unassuming girl from all the quiet, unassuming pictures we've seen of her, and we know the peaceful, melodious tone of the song from all the peaceful, melodious musical settings we've heard of the Magnificat.

Let's try to imagine the singer somewhat differently. Imagine her as the older sister of Joan Baez, with a wild look in her eyes and a passionate determination to her voice. Imagine the words—not whispered, or even sung in a sweet soprano, but belted out, as a protest song.

My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
who has regarded the low estate of God's servant.
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed;
for God who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is God's name.

And God's mercy is on those who fear God
from generation to generation.

God has shown strength with God's arm,
has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts,
put down the mighty from their thrones,
and exalted those of low degree;
has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich has sent empty away.
God has helped God's servant Israel,
remembering to show mercy,
as God spoke to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his posterity forever.

The first half of our experiment, then, is to picture the singer as Mary Baez, a protest singer, so that we can hear the song as a protest song.

The second half of the experiment is to reconsider our own roles in the song. Are we accustomed to imagining ourselves as the hungry people whom God will fill with good things, as the people of low degree whom God will exalt? Might we find new meaning in the protest song if we imagine ourselves for a change as the mighty whom God will pull down, as the rich whom God will send empty away?

This is not an easy thing to do, because all of us sense our powerlessness, our insignificance in the grand scheme of things. We have learned that many of the evils of our society are systemic evils, that oppression is institutional, that injustice is rooted in structures as well as in individuals. But as true as that is, does it let us off the hook? Or are we using big words like military-industrial complex, multinational corporations, institutional racism, systemic oppression, to avoid our own share of the responsibility—our responsibility as individuals, and our responsibility as ministers of the gospel?

This song is not only a protest song, it is a prophecy of God's coming judgment, the judgment that we are called upon to contemplate during this Advent season. God promises that judgment will bring radical role reversals. The high and mighty will be pulled down, the rich will be sent away empty-handed. But there is little value simply in contemplating judgment. More to the point is considering how to escape the judgment. The way to escape enforced role reversal may be to engage in some voluntary role reversal—to pull ourselves down, to empty our own hands by choice. If we do not want God to pull us down, we must learn how to share our power and our wealth.

The point of my words today in simplest terms is this: God has promised to bring about a forcible role reversal. If we want to avoid that, we must bring about our own voluntary role reversal. The issues are complex, but one

way to begin is to use imagination and creativity. As powerless as we feel in the face of institutional, societal evils, nevertheless, God has given us the power of imagination.

How can we begin to reverse the roles in actuality, until we understand just what the oppression looks like? Here's where imagination comes in. We need to practice some creative role reversals, so that we can learn how our society oppresses, and what it is like to be oppressed. With some imagination we can experience on a small scale what injustice feels like and then we can begin to envision justice—what would it look like, how would it feel?

I will mention four cases of voluntary role reversal that took imagination and that brought about profound change in an individual—and specifically, in an individual with some degree of public influence. John Howard Griffin wrote these words in 1959 (at that time his vocabulary was appropriate):

For years the idea had haunted me, and that night it returned more insistently than ever.

If a white man became a Negro in the Deep South, what adjustments would he have to make? What is it like to experience discrimination based on skin color, something over which one has no control?

How else except by becoming a Negro could a white man hope to learn the truth? Though we lived side by side throughout the South, communication between the two races had simply ceased to exist. Neither really knew what went on with those of the other race. The Southern Negro will not tell the white man the truth. He long ago learned that if he speaks a truth unpleasing to the white, the white will make life miserable for him.

The only way I could see to bridge the gap between us was to become a Negro. I decided I would do this.

I prepared to walk into a life that appeared suddenly mysterious and frightening. With my decision to become a Negro I realized that I, a specialist in race issues, really knew nothing of the Negro's real problem.

And so Griffin asked a doctor to darken his skin, he shaved the hair off his head and hands, and he became a black for six weeks. For six weeks he hitchhiked, rode buses, ate in restaurants, slept in cheap hotels, talked with people, as a black man. The experience changed him profoundly. He was no longer just an expert in race issues. Now he knew what it was like to search for a toilet that he was allowed to use, to walk all over town to find a drink of water that wasn't off limits to him.

When I read Griffin's book, *Black Like Me*, around 1960, it had a profound impact on me as well. As a result, when I was working in a house church in Berkeley in the 1970s I was able to understand what one of the women in my church wanted me to do when she challenged me to a similar role reversal—and I could understand how it could help me in my ministry. Mariana has cerebral palsy and has to spend much of her time in a wheelchair. Many of the people to whom I was ministering at that time had physical limitations of all varieties, and I needed to gain a better understanding of their lives.

Mariana challenged me to spend not six weeks, but only one day, in a role reversal. She told me to try to spend twenty-four hours without using the muscles involved in putting my thumb and index finger together or my thumb and middle finger together—right hand only. I was still allowed to use the other two fingers of my right hand, and all the fingers of my left hand. It was a very small experiment, and it succeeded in a very small way. I was learning by experience perhaps one percent of the frustration that Mariana experiences all the time. I had to button my clothes, prepare and eat my food, unlock my apartment, and pay for everything I bought either with my left hand, which is almost completely useless, or with my teeth, or perhaps not be able to do it at all. When the twenty-four hours were over, I had a new respect for Mariana's independence and skill in living.

But she wasn't satisfied. Okay, I had a new experience of frustration, a new respect for physically limited people. But I hadn't had much experience of the discrimination that they face every day from a society that values normalcy, beauty, grace, and productivity, and disdains people who are abnormal, physically ugly, graceless, and "unproductive." Mariana's next challenge was to ask me to spend a morning in her wheelchair. This was possible because she is able to walk short distances, especially when she can push her chair for support.

We spent several hours together staging various scenarios around Berkeley. In each, I was in the chair and the object of public discrimination. The highlight of the morning was the half hour we spent together in a park. As we approached, still hidden behind a group of trees, Mariana got out of the chair, I got in, and she pushed me the last few yards onto the grass. We each took our books and pretended to read for a half hour—me in the wheelchair, Mariana on the grass nearby. I had my fill of the curious stares, the rude questions, the disdainful avoidance, the embarrassed glances, the parents' calling their children away. The best part, since Mariana has a delightful sense of humor along with her anger, was when the half hour was up and I

got out of the chair, helped Mariana up off the grass, and into the chair, and pushed her calmly away.

Those two experiences, brief as they were, changed me profoundly. I have Mariana's creative imagination to thank for the fact that I am able to feel and to think differently about what it is like to live with a physical limitation.

This past October I learned how one man very creatively used his imagination to carry out another variation on the theme of role reversal. Charles Curran, professor of theology at the Catholic University of America, is one of the greatest Catholic priests whom I have had the privilege of meeting. His teaching of theology has been profoundly affected by his own creativity and courage.

A few years ago he had come to the realization that he lived in a male world. Never since the fourth grade had he been in a situation where a woman had been his teacher. He realized that he needed to go to school again, that for his own good he needed to put himself in the position of learning from a woman. So he enrolled in a university course in theology taught by a woman.

Now, we need to engage in some imaginative role reversal ourselves for a minute before we can even begin to appreciate what this must have meant for Charlie Curran. Imagine that you are a middle-aged man, a Catholic priest, full professor at a major American university, and a world-renowned and deeply respected author and lecturer . . . that when you were an infant your mother cared for you and taught you . . . that for the first four grades of school you had women teachers . . . but that ever since the fourth grade you have never been asked to acknowledge that any woman could teach you anything.

Think what that might mean emotionally: your puberty, your adolescence, your maturity, your manhood, your career—all of them came about because you had grown out of learning from women and had entered a man's world. Your whole life was structured around a male hierarchy, and you knew your place in that hierarchy. For Curran to enroll in that course was not for a middle-aged man to pretend for a while that he was twenty-five again—no, it was emotionally to become ten years old again, to be again a child being taught by a woman. And for a Catholic priest much worse than that—being taught theology by a woman.

Curran was profoundly changed by that semester's experience. The effect of that experiment may be one of the reasons why some people consider him to be a dangerous person, one whom his church is trying to silence.

The last role reversal I will mention is harder to discuss, but it has been

forced upon me since last Wednesday. Last Wednesday morning as I was getting dressed, I was thinking about the memorial service that many of us would attend that day for Tripp Resner, the son of our friends André and Mary Resner.¹ Suddenly the radio announcer started giving new statistics about infant mortality around the world. In a frantic leap at the radio I turned it off, saying "I can't deal with those statistics today. Tripp has just died. Don't force me to think about other babies dying."

But sometimes even when we turn something off, we haven't succeeded in getting it out of our minds, and that's the way it has been for me since Wednesday morning. Although I can't quote the statistics, I haven't been able to stop thinking about the babies who are dying around the world.

If you will join me in imagining this role reversal, you will not shed one tear less for André and Mary, nor will you be any less creative and wise and loving and considerate in sharing their grief with them. But you will stop and think: Oh, is this what it feels like when a baby dies in Ethiopia or in Northern Ireland or in Israel or on the West Bank or in Central America?

And then you might think: No, this is not exactly what it feels like. There is a difference. There is a reversal. Part of the horror of last week was that babies in Princeton are not supposed to die. We don't expect it. We have hospitals and nutrition and medicine, and children are expected to live. Part of the horror of infant mortality in many other countries of the world is that children are not expected to live, so there is not that same shock when they die. To the contrary, it is a real accomplishment if they do live to adulthood. That doesn't make the horror any less, but it is of a different kind. There is a reversal.

The situations I have mentioned—racism, discrimination against those with physical limitations, sexism, world hunger, and warfare—are complex, and the nature of our responsibility is complex. Any solutions will also be complex. But surely a first step toward finding some answers is the creative use of our imaginations, creative attempts at role reversal, so that we may begin to experience in a very small way the pain and the suffering that shape other people's entire lives. As God has given us the imagination to find ways to experience their pain, God can also give us the imagination to find new solutions.

God takes a profound interest in our attempts at role reversal. After all, God is the one who did it first and best. Isn't that what the Christmas story is—the story of the big Role Reversal with two capital Rs?

¹ André and Mary Resner are students at Princeton Seminary. Their fifteen-month-old son, Tripp, died unexpectedly in December.

Let us sing the song of Mary Baez, and let us pray for the imagination to engage in voluntary role reversal, so that we may not have to undergo enforced role reversal.

Benediction

In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:
whose state was divine,
who nevertheless did not cling
to equality with God
but chose emptiness instead—
to assume the condition of a slave,
and to become as human beings are . . .

Go with the peacefulness that only God can give,
Go to create the peace that God has made possible.
Amen.

Dale W. McMillen, Jr.

1914-1986

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY wishes to express its profound gratitude for the life, work, and witness of Dale W. McMillen, Jr., who died on April 18, 1986. Bud, as he was affectionately known to us, joined the Board in January 1973. He was active in all the affairs of the Seminary until illness overtook him and he was unable to function.

Bud was born in Van Wert, Ohio, in 1914. He spent most of his life in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and his entire business career was spent with Central Soya, which is family related and which he guided with great business acumen. Central Soya under his leadership was one of the one hundred largest companies in the nation.

Bud was a great churchman, serving faithfully as a member and officer in the First Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne. He and his family led the move that kept First Church in the center of downtown Fort Wayne, where a beautiful new edifice was constructed, community services were expanded, and leadership was given to a dynamic city. Bud was also a member of the Council on Theological Education and served as the first lay chairperson of this organization. His style was low-keyed and his demeanor always mild, but his leadership was unmistakable and always progressive. He worked very closely with the director of the council, the late Dr. John W. Meister, who had been his pastor in Fort Wayne for many years.

Bud and his beloved wife, Betty, were both graduated from Northwestern University, and his love for higher education, including theological education, remained undiminished throughout his life. He was unusually generous to the Seminary with his time and his substance. On more than one occasion, he contributed substantially when an emergency arose, always with the understanding that his gift would not be publicized.

Bud is survived by his wife, one daughter, and two sons. To them the Board wishes to extend deepest sympathy in their loss and thanksgiving for the victory into which Bud has entered in Jesus Christ.

John Grier Buchanan

1888-1986

JOHN BUCHANAN was a man for all seasons. A brilliant lawyer and jurist, an accomplished scholar, and a renowned raconteur, he served faithfully this institution as a trustee from the time of his induction as a member of the Board in 1943.

John was born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, on July 24, 1888. He attended Princeton University and was a member of the famous Class of 1909. He studied law at Harvard, graduating in 1912, and he followed the practice of law throughout his career. He was one of the most respected leaders in Pittsburgh. In 1949 he served as president of the Pennsylvania Bar Association. John was offered professorships in schools of law, but he always chose to remain in private practice. He was followed into the practice of law by his son, John, Jr., who died in early middle-age from a heart attack. We remember John's saying that the hardest thing that he had ever had to do was to read the memorial to his son before the Bar Association of Pennsylvania.

John was also a trustee of Princeton University, and his dual role of leadership in the University and the Seminary was a great help in keeping the two institutions close and in coordinating their policies and plans.

John served on the Search Committee that chose the fourth president of the Seminary. His favorite responsibility was work on the Library Committee, which he chaired at the time Speer Library was constructed. He influenced clients to leave money for the endowment of Speer Library, and he was a prominent participant in the program when this building was dedicated.

John's love for and loyalty to the Seminary never diminished, even in his last years. He and his lovely wife, Olive, regularly attended the annual meeting of the Princeton Seminary Alumni/ae Association of Western Pennsylvania, on the first Monday in May, and when called on to speak at these meetings, he was always ready with a story about the Seminary and a word of encouragement about its future.

He was a faithful member of East Liberty Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh. Although his home for many years was very close to the Shadyside Church, he maintained his loyalty to East Liberty and served it in many capacities throughout at least four pastorates of Princeton Seminary alumni/ae. Here again his words were always those of encouragement and of gratitude for the ministry of the Church and for its pastor. He was in the habit of tak-

ing his Greek New Testament to church and following the lesson while it was being read. He would also bring his Greek New Testament to the Seminary and audit the lectures of new professors in New Testament. John was a cultivated man with a keen mind and deep learning.

To his wife and to his children the Board wishes to extend deep sympathy in their loss but also profound gratitude for a life of nearly a century that enriched every relationship that it sustained. It was a privilege to work with him through the years and to be enriched by his energy, intelligence, and deep faith.

Review Article: Holy Baptism and Services for the Renewal of Baptism¹

by DONALD MACLEOD

*A native of Nova Scotia, Canada, Dr. Donald Macleod is Francis Landey Patton Professor of Preaching and Worship Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. He is the author of seven books in this field, including Word and Sacrament, Presbyterian Worship, Dynamics of Worship (a translation of *Traité de Liturgique*), and a book of sermons, Higher Reaches.*

IN 1980 the separate branches of the Presbyterian Church, which comprise now the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., had resolved independently and coincidentally to prepare "a new book of services for corporate worship, including a Psalter, hymns, and other worship aids." These would be submitted to the Church for trial use, looking forward to their compilation into a single volume to be given final approval by a future General Assembly. This will be the first service book of its kind since 1946 and in all likelihood, in keeping with all previous collections of Presbyterian rites, it would be for "optional use."

Already a beginning had been made with the publication of "Supplemental Liturgical Resource, No. 1" under the title *The Service for the Lord's Day* (see review in *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, vol. VI, no. 2, 1985, pp. 142-46). This new resource volume, No. 2, is the product of another task force appointed by the administrative committee of the office of worship and provides substantial materials for the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism. The work of this group was guided and informed by the chapter on baptism in the new *Directory of Worship* (received for study by the 196th General Assembly in 1984 and now pending official approval) and by a mutual exchange of views and opinions between the two task forces during their terms of service. Moreover, the baptism committee consulted liturgical scholars in Presbyterian and other traditions and through their correspondence and interaction the present product has been "field-tested," evaluated, and improved. Throughout all these processes and procedures these various groups felt it to be their mutual responsibility to dispel much of "the extraordinary confusion about baptism in the church today" (p. 14).

The composition of this volume comprises two main sections: "Holy Baptism" and "The Renewal of Baptism." In the first section there is a useful and pertinent chapter on current problems related to baptism; a suggested order of the service of worship in which baptism is celebrated; an order for

¹ Supplemental Liturgical Resource, No. 2. Office of Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985. Pp. 120. \$5.95 (paper).

the actual celebration; auxiliary commentary and explanations of the separate parts and various actions and texts; and finally a brief compendium of appropriate scripture passages and musical numbers, including hymns. The second section is a discussion of the meaning and significance of the "renewal of baptism" and is accompanied by some twenty-five pages of resource materials to accommodate the many and varied parish situations and conditions any contemporary ministry encounters. Between these two main sections is inserted a "Commentary on an Order for Holy Baptism," a very helpful and instructive addition to the volume as a whole.

Any analysis or evaluation of this or any other Christian rite is bound to be colored by some subjective biases and opinions; moreover, in a tradition such as American Presbyterianism, we are stalked by the question whether these carefully worked forms, rubrics, etc., will be practiced or even accepted as practicable. Such reservations aside, it can be said initially and with positive emphasis that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has taken here an overdue forward step in supplying its ministry and people with a studied and comprehensive book of baptismal forms of a definitive character. Pastoral situations will vary and may require a certain flexibility and often a tangential exercise of ministerial imagination, but with the final approval of this new volume, any pluses and minuses will be realistic departures from the understanding that already the Church has committed itself to certain standards and that these have been officially accepted and recognized.

On a careful reading of this liturgical resource, certain elements merit immediate commendation. The opening chapter—the problems and promise of baptism—is very pertinent and any minister in a contemporary parish situation will react knowingly to its strictures and identify his or her own experiences with it. Many users of this new book will rejoice in the abundance of alternate resources, the collection of liturgical texts, the insertion of the Creed (pp. 40-43), but chiefly in the committee's effort to bring this Christian rite into its crucial place in the people's nurture in our common faith. Incidentally, it is unfortunate they have seen fit to jettison from the title the term "Sacrament of Baptism," especially when any attempt to identify this rite as such would be salutary. *The Directory* is very careful in this and underscores it by saying, "The Sacraments are an essential part of the public ministry of the church" (S-3.0100).

Ministers who have had extended service in the parish and have studied the matter of baptism from various pastoral and liturgical perspectives will find much in this new set of forms to merit general satisfaction. Not a few, however, will raise prudent and thoughtful questions, prompted by the bib-

lical and theological contexts from which the framers and editors have come. These responses the committee is anxious to hear (p. 9) and through them they hope the mind of the Church will find in this new volume its most balanced and representative expression.

I

There is, first of all, a need to question the action and implication suggested by the term "renewal of baptism." The terminology is new, but is it not almost a reissue in other garb of what traditionally the Church had once done but allowed in recent decades to lapse into decay? Or, an equally pertinent question: How can any adult "renew" his or her baptismal vows when the candidate had not made them originally? These adult persons were then infants and the vows were made "on their behalf." Now, at this important and significant stage in the progression of spiritual nurture, the adult believer "confirms" (he or she cannot "renew"), i.e., ratifies the validity of those vows, the value of which has become a reality in their own experience. Confirmation is the accurate word. It connotes a once-for-all-ness, whereas "renewal" suggests a never ending series of *ad hoc* instants along the way. This perspective is presented clearly in the "Order for the Confirmation of Baptismal Vows and Admission to the Lord's Supper" in *The Book of Common Worship* (p. 131, 1946 edition).

The Preface to the new supplement laments that "Baptism's relation to confirmation (and to the Lord's Supper) continues to be a source of great confusion" (p. 17). This will continue as long as the clergy of the Church blur the pivotal and sequential distinction between the act of "infant" baptism and "joining the Church," i.e., confirmation, making thereby the celebration of the Lord's Supper a "free for all." This is the root of the confusion. It began when the Church failed to maintain that "infant" baptism initiated a process; it is not an end in itself. It opens a door by which a child of tender years is brought into the atmosphere and arena of the spiritual influence of the community of God's people. Confirmation was the *terminus ad quem* of that process. Confusion emerged when a theology of order was displaced by the irrationality of ardor and hence we read (p. 19): "The new baptismal rite . . . encourages the Church to bring baptized children to the Lord's Table as early as possible." (This reviewer watched recently an eleven-year-old boy amuse himself by using the communion wafer as a flip coin and then snicker as he saw it roll under the adjacent pew.) To be counted through "infant" baptism as "a member of the household of God" is acceptable up to a point, but it is at this point that the responsibility of the already confirmed members

of the congregation begins, as *The Book of Common Worship* indicates, "You the people of this congregation in receiving this child promise with God's help to be his [her] sponsor to the end that he [she] may confess Christ as Lord and Savior . . ." (p. 223). That moment of confession is confirmation with its concomitant admission to the Lord's Table. Confusion will be dispelled when we recoup the theology we have already.

There is unfortunately an inclination towards a "back over the shoulder" posture among the framers of new rites and formularies. Undue importance is given to what and how things were done in earlier centuries rather than why. After all, theirs was another culture, another realm, and another world view. Our need is to bring a proper theological perspective to bear upon the why-ness of things and just as such a rationale determines the shape of our act of worship and even the interior arrangement of our sanctuaries, so also should our procedures in spiritual growth and nurture be under its aegis also. Such a concern might ask us to reconsider the importance of the now defunct Preparatory Service, the Communion token, or even a meaningful recovery of the Fencing of the Table and to re-fit these traditions into contemporary action and dress. These might insert into our liturgical tradition larger theological substance than whether in the act of baptizing we are sure the people hear the water splash (p. 55).

II

The contemporary lack of an adequate understanding of the Sacrament of Baptism in the Church is well illustrated in the opening chapter, "Baptism: Problems and Promise" (pp. 13-21). It must be recognized, however, that where a proper grasp of the meaning of baptism among Presbyterians has broken down the blame should lie (a) upon the clergy who rarely preach on it or hold retreats for young fathers and mothers where this sacrament is explained clearly and their responsibility as parents to its claims and demands are emphasized and underscored; (b) upon a lack of an explanation of the biblical concept of "covenant"—so central in the Presbyterian theology of baptism—and of how crucial its fulfillment is to any viability of the benefits of the act of "infant" baptism (note in this new rite the omission, p. 27, of a direct question to be put to parents regarding the covenant concept); (c) upon a general failure to teach the nature and concept of baptism to congregations as a process, i.e., the elongation of the covenant claim from the moment of the parents' voicing their vows, through the years of the child's exposure to the fellowship of the community where God's grace is most active, and to the hour of eventual confirmation. Any movement to telescope

or eliminate this process reduces the high theological framework of the Presbyterian tradition regarding this sacrament. Few ministers are insistent upon tossing the ball into the people's court. The tentacles of the baptismal covenant reach into every church's overall activity: its program of worship, the processes and ends of its Christian education program, and its avenues of spiritual nurture; and any neglect of it among these forces makes "infant" baptism into a farce.

Probably in few other areas of the Church's life is the leadership of the denomination more sorely needed than in rehabilitating among Presbyterians the integrity and seriousness of the Sacrament of Baptism. Clergy and kirk sessions have been negligent and the lack even in the seminaries of teachers of liturgical theology who are sensitive to the parish situation is appalling. Confirmation is not—as the editors say on p. 19—"a rite in search of a theology." The theology is there, but it has been smothered by neglect and by the contemporary tendency to accommodate cures to symptoms rather than to the disease itself. For any new departure the best minds of the Church are needed. This need is a complete theological orientation of the Church's rites and formularies. No General Assembly should take such action lightly or permit quick and casual approval by untutored commissioners who know and care little about how the Church's beliefs are reflected in and give shape to their Sunday rituals.

III

When one reads this new Liturgical Resource, No. 2, in comparison with those of other mainline denominations (e.g., the Church of South India), one senses unfortunately something of an incantational breeze blowing through its vents, a phenomenon for which the Reformation supposedly supplied a corrective. One is surprised that some arguments from pre-Reformation times are entertained in the face of twentieth-century realism. Consider, for example, the peculiar emphasis upon the baptismal water. If Presbyterian tradition specifies "sprinkling" upon the infant's head, why such demonstrative acts as "Water may be poured into the font from a ewer, or large pitcher, held high enough above the font so that the falling water may be seen by all, and the sounds of its splashing may be heard" (p. 53)? There is no intrinsic salvic quality in the water. There wasn't in the Jordan. What is said on pp. 54-55 borders on magic. And pp. 29-30, 36 are a lapse into a fetishism in which the symbol becomes the thing it is intended to symbolize. Water washes away stains. In the act of baptism it symbolizes the operation of God's grace in removing the stain of sin. There is promised here that if the Church

and the parents involve themselves fully and sincerely into the total action, the day will come when the baptized infant at an age of reason and maturity will testify to what it means to be "saved by grace."

IV

Some miscellaneous considerations: (a) True, there is only one Sacrament of Baptism (this is well stated on p. 48); however, it would make for easier handling and reciting if the two rites (infant and adult) were printed separately. Ask any minister who has had to administer the rite simultaneously to a composite group. (b) Liturgically and instructionally the baptism should occur in the service of worship after the lections and sermon (stated on p. 49). However, any minister of a large congregation would consider it unrealistic to expect parents with some dozen restless infants to be at ease or attentive throughout the sermon. Moreover, there are other worshippers present also. (c) It is surprising that only one question is put to the parents of the child (i.e., apart from the superfluous query, "Do you desire that _____ be baptized?" or "Do you desire to be baptized?"—the fact that they are there makes this question unnecessary). Few denominational rites contain questions (three in all) of such adequacy as those of the Church of South India. (d) Sponsors or godparents are alien to the Presbyterian tradition because that is the role of the congregation. However, in an adult-oriented, non-family downtown church, the matter deserves consideration. (e) On p. 51 occurs the term "church membership," but it lacks unfortunately a definition. From the perspective of the formularies of this new rite such a term is an anomaly. (f) The discussion on p. 60 gives the impression that "the centrality of the water" is a paramount focus and consideration of this task force on baptism. Many will feel that the efficacy of the rite lies elsewhere, namely, in the faithful living out of the vows of both Church and parents by and through which God's grace is made fully operative. Pages 35-37 are a somewhat unusual insert and may not be approved except by those who are devotees of a talisman. (g) The sinfulness of sin is a painful reality in both the persons and culture of our time. However, the reiterated renunciations specified here (pp. 28, 33, 92) have a rather jagged edge and are somewhat loveless; indeed the item on ministry to the dying falls only slightly short of adding flames. (h) There is here a commendable attempt at thoroughness, but in the committee's carefulness to "touch all bases" they have overlooked the fact that the central ingredients of a properly ordered Presbyterian service of worship, a meaningful understanding of and involvement in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the steady exercise of the cure of souls, have brought spiritual

satisfaction and fulfillment to many in their search and need. And the Sacrament of Baptism in plain and unadorned dress has contributed its rightful share to it.

Dr. Bernard E. Jones of Cheshire, England, shares a helpful perspective with us:

In the baptismal service the minister hands back to the parents a little "layman." Now he has been welcomed into the "laos"—the people of God. Some churches will believe he is a member; others will prefer to say that he is within the congregation of Christ's flock. All would agree that there is something more to happen. There is something lacking until such time as the individual declares his own faith, for it is not enough that the free grace of God should be offered; it must be received and willingly accepted.

This little "layman" who is in the arms of the Church must grow and finally he must choose for himself whether he wants to be among the people of God. He must answer for himself when he is of age. His commitment may grow and change within the beginners' department of the family Church, in the Cubs or Brownies, in the scouts and guides, through the senior departments of the family Church, to a point where in one form of words or another he will make the response given by adult candidates for baptism in the Reformed Churches, "Yes, Jesus is Lord! Yes, Jesus is Lord!" (*The Expository Times*, LXXXV, 3, p. 82).

BOOK REVIEWS

Reventlow, Henning Graf. *Problems of Old Testament Theology in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. Pp. 194. \$12.95.

It will now be indisputable that no one has read more in the field of Old Testament theology than has Henning Graf Reventlow. In fewer than two hundred pages Reventlow surveys and comments on an enormous amount of literature—there are perhaps seven hundred names in the index—published in an impressive number of modern languages. It would be surprising to learn that so many people had written on Old Testament theology in this century, and indeed, Reventlow ranges far beyond the relatively narrow scope of Old Testament and biblical scholarship, referring even to such outsiders as Cleveland Amory and Theodore Roszak. As these names would indicate, among the “problems” of Old Testament theology Reventlow includes its interpretation in the scientific and popular culture.

The title of the English edition of this book may suggest that Reventlow will offer his own theological understanding of the Old Testament for the twentieth century. It helps to know that the German edition was published in 1982, in the series *Erträge der Forschung*, devoted to reporting and evaluating research within various areas of inquiry. Thus, what Reventlow has given us is essentially an extended bibliographical essay on Old Testament theology, considered as a discipline. It must also be said, however, that Reventlow offers superb summaries of the literature he surveys. He does not merely tell us what a given writer thought; he places each author in the context of a contested methodological or substantive issue and traces the course of debate on that issue. As a result, we know not only what almost everybody thought about almost everything in Old Testament theology during this century, we also know how the debates started and where they had gotten by 1982 (the English edition includes some publications through 1984). Furthermore, Reventlow offers his own evaluations throughout, helping thereby to identify the problems still confronting Old Testament theology and to understand why they have come to be problematic.

While the book is about such problems in the twentieth century, it begins much earlier, the first chapter tracing developments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These are brought into the present with a discussion of “dialectical theology,” in other words, Karl Barth, and his influence on the course of Old Testament theology. One of the more interesting discussions in this first chapter centers on the period of National Socialism in Germany and its anti-Semitic attack on the Old Testament. It is interesting because it details the vicious, and also sometimes humorous, distortions that can afflict biblical interpretation when it is made to serve ideological ends, and because it makes clear how important was the German situation for the course of Old Testament theology in subsequent years.

The middle chapters of the book treat the conventional problems of Old Testa-

ment theology: how to present it systematically (chapter 2); how to regard and incorporate its historical dimension (chapter 3); whether the Old Testament has a theological "center" in relation to which everything can be ordered (chapter 4). As would be expected, the name of Gerhard von Rad dominates the discussion in the last three chapters, which constitute about two-thirds of the book. One could even plausibly suggest that if it were not for von Rad there would be little need for Reventlow's book. Not only did von Rad provide a stunningly creative angle of approach to many of the important issues, and one that remains instructive and useful after a barrage of criticism from lesser lights, he has also provoked the most heated response from people within and without the guild of Old Testament scholarship. Reventlow's book is worthwhile if only for its detailed discussion of von Rad and his legion of critics.

It is in the last chapter, dealing with the issues of creation, myth, and wisdom (chapter 5), that Reventlow himself is most suggestive. That may be because it is in relation especially to creation and wisdom that Old Testament theology has probed most deeply in recent years. Reventlow not only brings this recent research into relation with earlier discussions, he also points to the problems posed by Old Testament creation theology for such issues as ecology, and he points to contemporary work in the natural sciences and systematic theology in order to clarify the nature and extent of the problem.

As I have already said, the book is nothing if not comprehensive. That makes it both useful and hard to read. So much literature is quoted or referred to within the body of the text that one is sometimes confused where the parentheses start and stop, or when we're reading Reventlow and when someone else. English readers have at least one advantage over their German counterparts; the English edition has an index of names, which, when there are seven hundred of them, is indispensable. Even at that, some bibliographical references are impossible to track down and some are just wrong. In more than one place references to page numbers in the book are followed by zeroes, indicating some sloppy proofreading.

John Bowden's English translation is generally accurate, even if it occasionally muddles what is clear in German. For example, page 93 has J. C. K. von Hofmann speaking of Christianity as a "fact of experience as it is found in nature," which would make no sense on Hofmann's lips. He is actually talking about "the nature of a fact of experience." The slip is unfortunate because Reventlow's discussion of Hofmann is probably the best available in English. But one should only be grateful to those, like Bowden, whose unenviable vocation it is to translate theological German.

The book will best serve teachers and graduate students, whom it will serve very well, especially when used together with Reventlow's companion volume, *Problems of Biblical Theology in the Twentieth Century*, which has just been published.

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Sakenfeld, Katharine Doob. *Faithfulness in Action: Loyalty in Biblical Perspective*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. Pp. 158.

This study of the concept of *hesed* began with Sakenfeld's Harvard dissertation (*The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*, Missoula: Scholar's Press, 1978) and is now broadened in the present volume with a keener eye to the theological importance of *hesed* in the biblical tradition and in the lives of modern Christians concerned for integrity in human relationships.

From the very beginning Sakenfeld suggests a way of doing biblical theology that incorporates one's own experience into the process of interpreting the text. Chapter one ("Contemporary Experience and Ancient Witness") juxtaposes situations in modern experience with beginning definitions of *hesed* in Hebrew experience. She proposes to translate this wide-ranging concept as "loyalty" and sees the seeking after loyalty in relationships to be central both to our own experience and that of biblical communities. Since both contexts are concerned for "faithfulness in action" our study of biblical texts cannot be an abstract, descriptive enterprise but must be carried out interactively with our concern for loyalty in our own experience of relationship.

Sakenfeld carefully leads us through discussions of the biblical stories which embody the concern for loyalty as central to the life of faith. Chapter two focuses on stories of human loyalty, chapter three on God's covenant loyalty, chapter four on God's loyalty to those in need, and chapter five on the loyalty to which the people of God are called. These sections are enriched by Sakenfeld's ability to bring fresh exegetical insight to biblical material. She is particularly good at exposing the important dimensions of loyalty to be found in the narrative traditions. So many pass through the stories of our biblical faith with little awareness of the way in which the storytelling of faith communities makes clear their values and identity.

The final chapter of this book is particularly rich. Sakenfeld returns to her concern for relating biblical address to contemporary experience. After a brief consideration of New Testament affirmations of loyalty she turns to consider how our own efforts to seek loyalty in relationship might be informed by the biblical discussion of loyalty. Here Sakenfeld is not content to let the task of biblical theology rest with the exegetical work alone. She suggests six guidelines for wrestling with the complex and often ambiguous contexts in which we must seek to embody "faithfulness in action." Although she does not identify it in these terms she is really dealing with the Bible as a resource for the doing of Christian ethics. This is an arena too seldom addressed by biblical scholars but one which ordinary people in the life of the church must deal with on a daily basis. Sakenfeld's guidelines are helpful in focusing our efforts at decisions which embody loyalty without holding out the false promise that such guidelines can resolve all ambiguity or make these decisions for us. She goes on in this chapter to reflect on the implications of these guidelines in the specific arenas of family, vocation, patriotism, and the church. Here is where one could wish for a

longer book. These sections are provocative but underdeveloped. It is clear that Sakenfeld has more to say here and perhaps held back for fear it would not be appropriate to a "biblical" volume.

This book is appropriately published in a series called *Overtures to Biblical Theology*. Part of the purpose of the series is to give a forum to new ways of doing biblical theology, to expose the creative frontiers. It is at this point that I want to commend Sakenfeld's effort and to make my one major criticism. On the one hand this work represents significant new processes in biblical study which recognize the futility of looking for some objective reading of the text to be found by proper use of critical method. Sakenfeld recognizes and demonstrates that biblical theology properly arises out of the intersection of the biblical story with our own story. On the other hand one wishes that these new understandings had made a bigger difference in the organization of the book. The impression is still that one does the exegetical work (chapters 2-5) and then applies its results to the life of faith (chapter 6). I suspect this is not really the way Sakenfeld works at all. I suspect her sensitivity to human experience has given her new eyes and ears for seeing and hearing the text. I would imagine the dialogic process reflected in the title of her opening chapter was in operation at every point in her work. In the future we can perhaps hope that Sakenfeld will move even further to give us not only the results of that dialogue but a clear view of its process by risking new patterns of published presentation. The church is eager for work that breaks out of the aridity of much critical biblical scholarship. Sakenfeld's book already communicates creatively the pertinence of the biblical word for our lives. I, for one, trust that we can count on her to produce yet further work that pushes forward on the frontiers of biblical theology in dialogue with our lives and faith.

BRUCE C. BIRCH

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Miller, Patrick D., Jr. *Interpreting the Psalms*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1986. Pp. 165.

This valuable little book is written by a scholar who takes his stand firmly in the life and worship of the church. His fondness for the book of Psalms, he tells us in the preface, reaches back to his childhood, when on Sunday afternoons psalms were read, sung, and memorized in the family circle. The recollection of that experience (a rather rare one in modern times!) provides a proper preface to a book which shows how the study of the psalms can deepen and enrich Christian faith.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part consists of five essays dealing with general approaches to the book of Psalms, in which the author delineates some of the trends in scholarly discussions and makes his own hermeneutical proposals. The second part, which is really the hermeneutical "payoff," contains fresh expositions of ten selected psalms: Psalms 1, 2, 14, 22, 23, 82, 90, 127, 130, and 139. Some

of these chapters have already appeared in print in other contexts (four of the essays and two of the expositions). Even though the book has had a history, it hangs together exceedingly well in its final form, and is arranged in such a manner that one can profitably read chapters separately.

For those who have taken their theological education a decade or so ago, this book will open up new horizons in the study of the psalms. Miller is one of the younger generation of scholars who is somewhat unhappy with the former approach to the psalms via so-called "historical criticism." To be sure, he appreciates the "form-critical" approach of Hermann Gunkel, which sought to classify psalms according to their "situation in life" within the Israelite community, and the "cult-functional" approach of Sigmund Mowinkel, which attempted to show how the psalms functioned in great cultic festivals, such as the New Year's celebration of God's enthronement. But for Miller it is "form criticism and beyond," to cite the title of a now famous address by James Muilenburg to the Society of Biblical Literature (1969).

What lies "beyond"—though not necessarily cancelling the insights of form criticism and cultic functionalism—is "rhetorical" or stylistic criticism. Here you will find an excellent introduction to the poetry of the psalms, including a reconsideration of long-accepted literary canons ("poetic parallelism" and all that) and, above all, an exquisite stylistic study of individual psalms (e.g., Ps. 1). According to the author, however, there is something else that lies "beyond," namely, an understanding of the way the various psalms function contextually in the *book* of Psalms, and indeed, in the larger canon of Scripture. He points out, for example, that Psalms 1 and 2 are paired as introductions to the Psalter, one beginning, and the other concluding, with a blessing. And he argues that we can take a cue from some of the superscriptions to the psalms (e.g., to Ps. 51) and read them in the context of scriptural stories, e.g., the David story or the story of Jeremiah's passion.

There are both gains and losses in the current emphasis on "final form of the text." The gain is a richer understanding of the psalms as *literature*—sacred literature—which, as Miller beautifully shows, resonates with deep human experiences running the whole gamut from lament to thanksgiving and praise. So understood, the psalms are lifted above their historical moorings within the history, sociology, and worship of Israel so that they now speak directly *for* us, articulating our responses to God's presence or apparent absence. The loss—and this would be felt perhaps by Catholics more keenly than Protestants—is that the psalms are not seen sufficiently in terms of their function in the history of a worshipping people, that is, as the service of God (liturgy) in the sacred place (temple) at the appointed times and seasons. Of course, in the transition from temple to synagogue, the psalms were "spiritualized," and this hermeneutical move has affected the Psalms in their final form. The question is whether the Christian church is bound exclusively by the hermeneutic of the final text, or whether it is theologically important to consider other levels of meaning, which "historical criticism" has sought to explore, if the full authority of Scripture is to be sensed.

The problem comes to the fore right at the beginning of the Psalter. Many of us

in Christian worship services since a bit when Psalm 1 is read responsively, for it too easily suggests an all too sharp distinction between the righteous and the wicked, as well as a neat doctrine of rewards and punishments. Miller's insightful and subtle theological exposition avoids and challenges the popular understanding of the psalm; and he helpfully suggests that the psalm, functioning as an introduction to the whole, issues an invitation to read the rest of the Psalter. Perhaps what needs to be added is that if one reads far enough, this rather neat theology will be called into question (see Psalm 73), as indeed it is challenged by Job and modern J.B.'s. It seems that a purely literary and canonical appreciation of Psalm 1 is not enough. Some sociological and historical understanding of biblical Judaism, and the place of Torah piety within it, could warn against taking the final form of the text at its face value and could contribute to both an appreciative and a critical understanding of the Psalter in the history of the people of God.

After all of these hermeneutical debates about approaches to the Psalter, the final test lies in the actual exposition of the particular psalms. In a sense the reader stands before the psalms one by one, as in a gallery where one views pieces of art, even though these works are arranged in a canonical collection. When it comes to appreciating the psalms individually, the reader will not be disappointed. Each one of the meditations is exquisite. Miller's treatment of Psalm 23, whose spiritual charm has been cloyed by familiarity, opens up new meanings in a text that has the God-given power to "restore the *nefesh* [person]" in the midst of the ups and downs of life's pilgrimage. And his exposition of Psalm 82—a poem to which people rarely turn—taps the power of a text that extols the majesty of God who is exalted in righteousness, as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed doxologically (Isa. 5:16).

Throughout the chapters of this book the psalms are treated in the canonical context of the *Christian* Bible. But Miller never engages in Christianizing the psalms. He recognizes that these poems have an open-ended, anticipatory dimension—a waiting for God to be manifest in a fuller sense on the horizon of God's future. He speaks primarily to the Christian community, without going into the agonizing question of the coexistence of the Jewish and Christian communities in the elective purpose of God. His point is, however, that the psalms and the New Testament stand in a dialectical relationship: they "interact" and "they speak to each other." The Christian appropriation of the Psalter adds a new and enriched meaning; on the other hand, the psalms, in their own right, provide theological dimensions that are necessary for the expression of Christian faith.

The distinctiveness of this study of the psalms is that the interpreter stands consciously within the community of faith and, like the commentaries of Luther and Calvin, speaks to the people, using the resources of scholarship in the service of the church. We may hope that this little book is a "foretaste" of a commentary on the whole book of Psalms that is yet to come, if not already on its way.

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Charlesworth, James H. (ed.). *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1983, 1985. Pp. 1 + 995 (vol. I) + 1006 (vol. II). \$40.00 each, or \$80.00 the boxed set.

Charlesworth, James H. *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: Prolegomena for the Study of Christian Origins*. Society for New Testament Studies 54. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985. \$34.50.

James H. Charlesworth, Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Seminary, is one of today's most interesting, innovative, and productive scholars. Upon completing the three works under review here, his interest was already refocused upon the *Codex Syriacus*, one of the richest treasures in St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai in Egypt. This is a palimpsest manuscript on which a fifth-century scribe copied the four Gospels in the Old Syriac version, a copy that was "scraped" in the eighth century (when the language had become archaic) to allow another scribe to impose upon it lives of female saints. That original copy of the Gospels is at best only faintly visible and only at some points, but could not be read or recovered until Charlesworth and his interdisciplinary team of experts began to apply new technologies. The importance of Syriac recensions has been recognized for decades, and *Codex Syriacus* is the earliest text in a language that is close cousin to the Aramaic normally spoken by Jesus and his disciples. Within a few years we can expect to know more, but I cite this work here as an example of Charlesworth's wide-ranging interests and abilities in "uncovering" fuller understandings of early Christianity.

Of comparable significance, although in quite different ways, are the subjects of this review, Charlesworth's three volumes on Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (literally, "writings with erroneous ascriptions"). The two-volume edition provides careful English translations with scholarly introductions for these materials, mostly dating between about 250 B.C. and 200 A.D. In addition, there is a substantial index to subjects and names that provide access to the texts. Unlike the Qumran finds, these documents are not recent discoveries, but only in the last hundred years have they begun to receive the study they deserve and many remain virtually unknown even today. In the 1890s R. W. Charles published five of these texts in their original languages, and in 1913 issued his two-volume English translation including only seventeen pseudepigrapha. Now Charlesworth and his international team of about fifty scholars make available in English fifty-two documents (three times the number in Charles' work), plus thirteen other related documents. The work required eleven years, during which the problems of coordination would alone make the task itself almost as impressive as the results.

The pseudepigrapha along with the Qumran documents put us in a position to understand both early Judaism and early Christianity in greater depth than ever before. A few observations may clarify the point. The richness and variety of Judaism particularly stand out from a study of these early writings, and in view of such evidence Charlesworth concludes that it is no longer possible to maintain the old as-

sumption of a "normative Judaism." Within the variety, however, we have a firmer base from which to study connections between Christianity and Judaism. Various forms of messianic expectations and of apocalyptic clarify not only the native Jewish context but also New Testament applications and developments. Whereas in these and other important areas, efforts to extrapolate backwards in time from the largely a-historical Talmud to interpret New Testament presentations of Judaism have often been unconvincing, these freshly available documents embracing the time of the New Testament itself provide a rich mine for understanding not only our own tradition as Christians, but also "the rock from which we were hewn." Whereas Qumran provides us with invaluable in-depth knowledge of one small sect withdrawn into the desert, the Pseudepigrapha clarifies the cultural and theological landscape of Judaism as a whole during the centuries immediately before, during, and after the lifetime of Jesus of Nazareth.

Some half-dozen documents in the cycle of Enoch, for example, provide rewarding evidence of the transitions involved here, presenting both Jewish materials and at certain places Christian redactions and reflections upon them. In these and many other ways, serious students are thus better enabled to understand both continuities and discontinuities in the Jewish and Christian traditions. The Parables of Enoch (1 Enoch 37-71), a Jewish document now generally dated by specialists as before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., provides descriptions of the heavenly Son of Man, the Messiah, the Elect One, and the Righteous One, obviously highly significant evidence. Of this Charlesworth observed in his Inaugural Address at Princeton on February 27, 1985, that "I am convinced these are four terms for the same intermediary of God," and surely help us to understand the claims made for Jesus in the New Testament. As applied by Charlesworth, the "new quest for the historical Jesus" is full of rich promise.

Charlesworth said of such early evidence that it "should be studied by theological students, clergy, the laity, and seminary professors" (*Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, N.S. vol. VI [1985], pp. 102 and 110). While many a pseudepigraphon could be read in whole or part by intelligent general readers, with aid from the introductions and notes provided in the two-volume edition, the same is not quite true for Charlesworth's *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament*, where the key is provided in the subtitle: *Prolegomena for the Study of Christian Origins*. Primarily addressed to professional Biblical scholars, this book contains three chapters in which Charlesworth attempts, in his own words, "to initiate a better way of performing our craft." His suggestions are usually balanced and judicious: while emphasizing the importance of this collection, he also recognizes that for a scholar to limit his interest to a single collection would be a fatal flaw. As an appendix, he provides his own summarizing reports of the SNTS Pseudepigrapha Seminars from 1976 to 1983, in which leading specialists discussed primary issues of their ongoing research in the Pseudepigrapha. Finally, there are almost fifty pages of footnotes, which I as an historical scholar found intriguing, even though this is not my primary field.

It is unfortunate that the inept marketing of this monograph by Cambridge Uni-

versity Press makes it difficult to secure copies. It took half a year of persistence on my part before I could get my hands on a copy of my own, and I know that other individuals as well as a leading theological book agency can report similar frustrations. On the other hand, Doubleday has done a fine job of promoting and distributing the two-volume English edition of texts.

In works so extensive as these, negative comments can always be made. Some specialists in the early languages and dialects represented in the OTP may object to some points in the translations of some of the fifty editors, whereas some general readers may wish here or there for ampler explanations in the introductions and notes accompanying the documents. But surely the main point to observe is that, by the prodigious efforts of the general editor and the individual editors, we now have available a far more extensive, also more competently based, library than ever before on early Judaism and on Christian origins. Because of the range of views represented in the Pseudepigrapha, this collection can stand on at least the same plane of importance with the Qumran scrolls, the latter representing greater density of coverage within a smaller sectarian movement, and it is of more general pertinence to the New Testament than the often wildly skewed Gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi.

At some points, I feel reservations about Charlesworth's suggestions, as when he repeatedly raises questions about the "canonical" on the basis of the reference in Jude, the shortest of New Testament texts, to 1 Enoch as inspired prophecy. But that fact has long been recognized, indeed as far back as the early church fathers, so the questions raised by it are not so urgent as Charlesworth seems to imply, and in no sense disqualifies the kinds of canonical criticism so cogently employed by Brevard Childs. But Charlesworth is unfailingly generous in questioning the judgment of other scholars, as he is with Childs, for example, and even when he decisively checkmates the contention of some scholars (principally Geza Vermes, I presume) who have argued that "Son of Man" occurs in the Gospels as a largely self-reflective figure of speech, perhaps a substitute for "I myself," and little more. And he is emphatic that "earliest Christian thought was intellectually sophisticated and that high Christology does not indicate late chronology." It is also intriguing to see his arguments that James may date to before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and that Hebrews is probably earlier, thereby lending new support to the suggestions of J. A. T. Robinson, G. W. Buchanan, and C. F. D. Moule. I do wish that he had been able to devote more analysis to Bishop Robinson's *Redating the New Testament* (in which Bishop Robinson argues that all NT books are much earlier than is now generally assumed) beyond referring to its "excitingly controversial arguments," and that he had referred to William R. Fowler's impressive arguments in favor of Matthew's priority among the gospels. But these are minor objections: the importance of these Pseudepigrapha publications will remain unchanged whether or not Bishop Robinson and/or Fowler carry the day.

Charlesworth has led in opening up a large storehouse of evidence for the reli-

gious and literary vitality of Judaism in the age of Jesus and for the period of Christian origins. These are the materials for substantive history, and I find it difficult to imagine that they will be superseded for many years to come.

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Roetzel, Calvin J. *The World That Shaped the New Testament*. Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1985. Pp. 120. \$11.95.

Recent research has significantly altered our understanding of the world that brought forth the Christian movement, by demonstrating both the previously unsuspected diversity of first-century Judaism and the pervasiveness of hellenistic influence in the Mediterranean world. Calvin J. Roetzel's *The World That Shaped the New Testament* (foreword by David L. Tiede) harvests the fruits of these recent technical studies on the ancient Mediterranean world and offers them, attractively arranged, to the nonspecialist. Roetzel surveys the social and symbolic forces that contributed to the shaping of the early Christian consciousness, on the assumption that an introduction to the world that was "background" as well as "homeground and foreground of the early church" will make the dynamic character of the New Testament more evident and will prove to be interesting in its own right.

Roetzel begins his survey by tracing the ebb and flow of political forces in the Mediterranean world from the time of Alexander the Great through the Roman period. He narrates Alexander's conquests in more detail than is necessary, but the account is lively and interesting in character. Next Roetzel ably describes the Ptolemaic and Seleucid machinations over Palestine and the growing Jewish resistance to Hellenism. The Maccabean revolt, Roetzel suggests, failed to eradicate hellenistic influence but nevertheless had important consequences for Israel's self-identity and sense of independence. Memories of the revolt provided hope and inspiration in the later fight against Rome. Such memories, together with other Jewish traditions celebrating the Lord's kingship and triumph over Israel's foes, would have made any proclamation of the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of God "electrifying" for first-century Jews. Roetzel emphasizes the political overtones of Jesus' message, as well as the political setting of the crucifixion. He argues that everywhere in the New Testament reactions to political forces are discernible: for example, Paul counseled obedience and attention to civic duty, and the author of Revelation portrayed the state as a monster. Roetzel's discussion of how Christian writers reacted to political realities could have been expanded. But even if the lines of connection to the New Testament are not as vivid as one might have liked, Roetzel has done an admirable job of painting the political scene.

In the second chapter Roetzel examines "forms of religious expression." The first section examines Jewish religious expression: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes, Essenes (with a description of the content of major documents from Qumran and of

their overall theological perspective), Zealots and Sicarii, and 'Am ha-'aretz. In his treatment of the development of the Pharisaic sect Roetzel distills and balances the findings of J. Neusner and E. Rivkin, who largely disagree with one another but alike refuse to accept uncritically the later rabbinic traditions as accurate descriptions of Pharisaism before 70 C.E. Roetzel repeatedly points out similarities between the beliefs and practices of the various Jewish groups and of the early Christians. In the latter half of the chapter Roetzel treats forms of hellenistic piety: the mystery religions, Stoicism, neo-Pythagoreanism, Cynicism, Gnosticism, and hellenistic Jewish piety. This is the least successful portion of Roetzel's work, partly because it lacks the illustrations and observations about connections to the New Testament that make the rest of the book so appealing. Roetzel presupposes an empire-wide "failure of nerve" in the period after Alexander, and suggests that confidence in the ability of traditional gods to help humans had all but vanished. Accordingly, Roetzel hardly mentions the role of traditional cultic sacrifices and festivals in the lives of first-century pagans. This silence is painfully conspicuous in light of such New Testament passages as 1 Thess. 1:9, 1 Cor. 8:1-13 and 10:14-30, and Acts 17:16-34 and 19:23-41, and contrasts sharply with the emphasis in recent scholarship on the vitality of pagan religion (e.g., Ramsay MacMullen, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* [New Haven: Yale University, 1981]). In his discussions of various philosophical schools of thought as expressions of "hellenistic piety" Roetzel misses the chance to stress the impact that widely diffused philosophical teachings had on evolving Christian moral standards (e.g., Paul's views on marriage, the use of virtue and vice lists, and the lists of household duties in later New Testament writings). Finally, Roetzel fails to mention the Epicureans, who were not "pious" in the traditional sense but were often classed with Christians by observers and certainly ought to be mentioned in any catalogue of first-century philosophical groups.

In the third chapter Roetzel looks at institutions that influenced the early Christian movement, including the Temple, synagogues, the Greek polis, and hellenistic kingship. The discussions of the Temple and of kingship focus on the institutions' *symbolic* impact on evolving Jewish and Christian consciousness (e.g., the influence of kingship on christology), whereas the treatments of the synagogue and polis emphasize the institutions' concrete *social* effects (e.g., the impact of synagogue leadership and worship styles on the early church). The entire chapter is informed by a sociology-of-knowledge perspective on the relationship between institutions and their supporting myths.

The fourth chapter, on Scripture and interpretation, is well-illustrated and remarkably clear. Roetzel begins by discussing briefly the history of the Septuagint, which in Christian circles was most often "the text to be interpreted." He introduces Philo's allegorical hermeneutics and describes the Qumran sectarians' several methods of dealing with sacred texts, including the imitation of scripture and the composition of commentaries, midrash, composite quotations, and allegories. In each case Roetzel judiciously assesses the similarities to New Testament methods of scrip-

tural interpretation. Finally, Roetzel reviews several of the rabbinic interpretive principles, which were codified after the New Testament era but influential even in Paul's day, as Roetzel's examples from the Apostle's letters demonstrate. Roetzel concludes the chapter with an account of the powerful hold that the scriptures had on Christians and Jews early in the common era. He writes, "The text was viewed as a dynamic reality, revealing the future, enlivening the past, and lending significance to the present."

In the final chapter, on "demons and holy men," Roetzel describes the mythological views of a struggle between demons and angels, Satan and Yahweh, that suffused first-century Jewish and Christian thought. There was a great and widespread dread before the powers of darkness, but Roetzel points out that people were not defenseless: magic, holy disciplines, and holy men were all thought able to ward off the demonic forces. Roetzel surveys both Jewish and pagan traditions about miracle workers, remaining sensitive to the nuances of individual accounts. He shows how elements of several very different traditions are paralleled in the accounts about Jesus' own miracle-working. In his concluding paragraphs, Roetzel stresses that the New Testament authors wrote from *inside* their world. To say that they "borrowed" from it is misleading, because it implies too studied and coldly deliberate a compositional process. Rather, the interaction of early Christians with their world was spontaneous and dynamic: "a flash of insight, a holy figure, or a historical event pregnant with meaning may lead an author to view the world in a new way."

In sum, Roetzel provides an exemplary treatment of a great many topics in short compass. Certainly there are flaws, as mentioned above. There are also omissions of topics that would have been relevant, such as travel and communication, social stratification of society, household arrangements, slavery, and education. Finally, a list of suggested readings for the various topics would have been a welcome supplement to the book's two maps, chronological table, and index. But these flaws and omissions pale in light of the book's overall high standard of scholarship and clear composition. *The World That Shaped the New Testament* is eminently readable and teachable, making it an excellent choice for use by undergraduates, seminary students, and home study groups.

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Betz, Hans Dieter, ed. *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Including the Demotic Spells*. Vol. I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986. Pp. liii + 339. \$39.95.

"The Greek magical papyri" is the name given to a collection of magical spells and formulas, hymns, and rituals from Greco-Roman Egypt. Dating from the 2nd century B.C. to the 5th century A.D., these documents provide a rare glimpse into the

vast religious "underworld" of late classical and early Christian times. Betz, assisted by a team of consultants, has collected a wide variety of previously published editions of magical texts in Greek and Demotic. The volume presents an English translation of individual spells and remedies for a broad range of troubles plaguing humankind—everything from migraine to runny nose to bedbugs to scorpion sting to fever with shivering fits, and, of course, all the troubles of love and money. In addition to the spells themselves, the volume reproduces the magical drawings, characters, and symbols that often accompany the texts.

Samples among hundreds of such charms and recipes are the following:

"To keep bugs out of the house: Mix goat bile with water and sprinkle it. *To keep fleas out of the house:* Wet rosebay with salt water, grind it, and spread it" (p. 119).

"Favor and victory charm: Take a blood-eating gecko that has been found among the tombs and grasp its right front foot and cut it off with a reed, allowing the gecko to return to its own hole alive. Fasten the foot of the creature to the fold of your garment and wear it" (p. 120).

"If you want someone to cease being angry with you, write with myrrh on linen this name of anger: 'CHNEŌM.' Hold it in your left hand and say: 'I restrain the anger of all, especially of him, NN, which is CHNEŌM'" (p. 160).

An amulet for getting rid of fever begins with a charm written in seven lines, each successive line omitting the first and last letters of the previous line:

zagourēpagourē
agourēpagour
gourēpagou
ourēpag
urēpag
rēpa
ēp

"O excellent ruling angels, give [him, NN], whom Sophia bore, rest from the fever which restrains him; this very day, this very hour, immediately, immediately, quickly, quickly" (p. 302).

This last talisman, which was deciphered and edited by the present reviewer for inclusion in vol. 3 of *Papyri in the Princeton University Collections* (1942), is written on cheap papyrus by an unlettered hand, and measures about two inches wide and about six inches long. When discovered in Egypt it was still folded in a narrow compass, presumably to be worn on the body of the patient. The charm, composed of outlandish syllables that convey no meaning, was intended to produce the desirable psychological effect upon the patient. The theory was that the successive shortening of the incantation of seven lines would be effective in lessening the virulence of the fever.

In order to give the reader a better understanding of the strange and often bizarre world of ancient magic, Betz's volume contains two substantial introductions that

explain the general nature of the sources, one by the editor on the Greek spells, and one by Janet H. Johnson on the Demotic spells. Accompanying notes explain difficulties in the texts as well as call attention to phenomena peculiar to the religious and social world of the time.

Readers of the *Seminary Bulletin* will recall the account of the Apostle Paul's encounter with a group of itinerant Jewish exorcists in Ephesus (Acts 19:13-16). The outcome of that altercation was that "a number of those who practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all." Of course such handbooks of spells were considered to be of great monetary value, and it is therefore not surprising to be told that when they counted the value of the burned books they "found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:19).

The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation will be a useful resource for scholars in a wide variety of fields, from the history of religions to classical languages and literature. Those who are interested in the occult and the history of magic will find here many antecedents of the superstitions concerning horoscopes and the signs of the zodiac that still remain current today.

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Lyall, Francis. *Slaves, Citizens, Sons: Legal Metaphors in the Epistles*. Grand Rapids: Academie Books, Zondervan Press, 1984. Pp. 288. n.p. (paper).

Biblical scholars, like Roman senators, have never been famous for welcoming interlopers. And biblical scholarship is often as inaccessible and unedifying as the legal labyrinth of ancient Roman law. So one welcomes this attempt by Francis Lyall, an "outsider" to the biblical studies guild, to introduce the lay person to Roman law and its relevance for the New Testament.

Francis Lyall is professor of public law at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Though his own discipline does not include Roman law, Lyall uses his legal expertise to analyze Roman law as a context for reading several biblical metaphors. While giving some attention to other books of the New Testament, he concentrates on the Pauline corpus, simply because, Lyall argues, Paul's letters show more influence from Roman legal terminology.

Lyall discusses laws related to slaves and freedpersons, citizens and non-citizens, and the different members of the Roman household. He points out the Roman legal background for early Christian language of adoption, inheritance, and redemption. He also discusses the relevance of Roman law for certain terms and concepts which come from, one might say, the "business world," terms such as "partnership," "earnest," and "seal," and concepts such as "the faith of Jesus Christ," understood in the sense of the Roman legal device of *fidei commissum*.

Several aspects of Lyall's study are quite on target. For one thing, his thesis is clearly correct: that several New Testament metaphors, especially in Paul's letters,

can be understood better when read against the background of Roman law. He has rightly pointed out that the metaphor, "freedman of the Lord," in 1 Corinthians 7:22 functions within the context of the Roman patron/client relationship which Roman law carefully protected. Furthermore, his study of the Roman household in legal texts sheds light on "household" metaphors in the New Testament (see his chapters 4 and 5), including those related to "adoption" (Romans 8:15, 23; 9:4; Galatians 4:5).

Slaves, Citizens, Sons invites the non-specialist to enter the difficult and neglected subject of Roman law. The book is popularly written with devotional interests in mind. It offers an introduction into the life of the people of the early Empire *via* that Empire's laws. This attempt to place the New Testament in its historical environment is commendable.

Unfortunately, this very strength of the book, its popular treatment, tends to be at fault for many of its weaknesses. The biblical scholar, for example, will wish for more detailed and thorough analysis of Roman law and its place in ancient society. (A good introduction to Roman law might serve the scholar better than would Lyall's book. See, for example, John Crook, *Law and Life of Rome* [Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967]; Max Kaser, *Roman Private Law*, fourth edition [translated by Rolf Dannenbring, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1984]. For a convenient collection of primary and secondary texts see F. H. Lawson, ed., *The Roman Law Reader* [Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1969].) Moreover, Lyall will sometimes make an interesting point, only to fail to provide evidence for the assertion. For instance, he notes, "It was general practice to examine probable offenders under torture, particularly if they were slaves, but also if they were not Roman citizens" (p. 62). There is little reason to doubt the assertion; but one might like to review the primary evidence, which is not given. On p. 83, Lyall claims that the Roman form of adoption "was becoming known even in 'non-Roman' areas in the empire." But the reader looks in vain for evidence or examples.

The book's greatest weakness for the scholar lies in its failure to answer questions biblical scholars may have about Roman law. The problem of dating the laws is a perennial one. The legal codes themselves are late editions of earlier material. The scholar untrained in ancient law needs help in order to avoid anachronisms when using Roman legal codes. Lyall's treatment, however, does not address the problem.

One would also like to know how Roman law actually related to urban society under the Empire. Surely, one cannot simply read the laws and from them reconstruct "real life." For example, the law stated categorically that all people fell into one of two categories: slave or free. Yet, as studies by M. I. Finley, among others, have shown, slavery in "real life" was a much more ambiguous institution. Many people, slaves included, occupied positions, both formally and informally, somewhere between the two simple categories of "slave" and "free." (See Finley's "Between Slavery and Freedom," in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6 [1964], 233-49; and *The Ancient Economy*, 2nd ed. [London: The Hogarth Press, 1985], pp. 64-69.) A legal expert might help biblical scholars determine the relation between

the legal codes and actual social life of the early Empire. Such information might prove useful in analyzing the various uses of "slave of Christ" in the New Testament.

Though *Slaves, Citizens, Sons* offers some discussion of legal terminology, scholars may desire more detailed study of particular legal terms and devices. For example, David Daube has pointed out that under Roman law, sons, though heirs, owned no property, no matter how old they were. (See, for example: David Daube, *Roman Law: Linguistic, Social, and Philosophical Aspects* [Edinburgh: At the University Press, 1969], pp. 75ff.; see also Kaser, p. 77.) Legally, the head of the household owned all wealth, whether money, property, businesses, or whatever. Yet arrangements were made, wholly legal, which allowed "dependents," for all practical purposes, to possess and manage property. Roman laws tried to walk a narrow line between the ideal of maintaining the position of the paterfamilias as the *sole* owner within a family and the economic (and familial!) realities which made it necessary for sons and daughters and even slaves to control property. Lyall mentions the legal situation (pp. 120ff.). But his application of the information is somewhat predictable: "As children of God, Christians are never to be sent out on their own to do what they can. On the contrary, their Father will care for them and supervise their way" (p. 121). Application aside, scholars may wish that the difficult legal texts were explained in more detail.

Of course, one cannot fault a book for not being what it never claimed to be. And Lyall tells us in the preface that he first became interested in the subject when preparing a Bible study for his home church in Scotland. At any rate, the problems mentioned above make the book less useful for the scholar. Different weaknesses render it possibly misleading for the lay person.

In the first place, the exegesis throughout is quite uncritical. Lyall takes Old Testament narrative uncritically as history which accurately portrays ancient Jewish legal practice (pp. 49-52). With regard to the New Testament, and especially Paul, "psychologizing" sometimes confounds an argument, as when, for instance, a text or practice is explained by reference to "the Jewish mind" (p. 70) or "Paul's legal bent" (p. 83, cf. 139). Lyall's evangelical theology ("C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* with a Calvinistic tinge," p. 10) rules the exegesis. For example, trinitarian orthodoxy sometimes controls discussions of Pauline texts as if Paul possessed a trinitarian doctrine as well-defined as Augustine's (e.g., pp. 140 and 147; Lyall accepts the pastoral epistles as authentic).

In the second place, statements of history are sometimes inaccurate or misleading. One such instance is Lyall's repeated assertion that Paul was "a trained lawyer" (p. 80 *et passim*; see index under "Paul, legal training"). This statement will likely mislead a modern person unfamiliar with the practice of law in the ancient world. Of course, Paul would have received an education in Jewish scripture and probably in Pharisaic interpretation (though there is no reason to accept without question that he was educated in Jerusalem or by Gamaliel, as is claimed by Acts). Paul may have

participated in discussions about contemporary legal application of Jewish texts and traditions. And if Paul had a rhetorical education in the Greco-Roman tradition he may have practiced giving mock speeches in "school" on legal themes or on famous cases. But to call Paul a "trained lawyer," especially when one's subject is primarily Roman law, implies either that he was a jurist concerned with the codification and theory of Roman law, along the lines of the classical jurists such as Gaius, or that he was actually trained and accomplished in conducting cases in court, like Cicero. Either implication is incorrect.

New Testament scholarship, like every discipline, needs fresh air from the "outside." And attempts to open technical material to a wider audience of non-specialists are commendable. But what Lyall offers here is, unfortunately, not enough to be very useful to the trained historical critic. And much of the study would mislead one not so trained. The attempt is welcome; the result somewhat disappointing.

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MacMullen, Ramsay. *Christianizing the Roman Empire: A.D. 100-400*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984. Pp. 183. \$18.00.

Ramsay MacMullen claims that his *Christianizing the Roman Empire* aims at history, not theology. It seeks to come to historical grips with the most curious and yet unexplained phenomenon of Western civilization, the so-called "triumph" of Christianity in the period 100-400 C.E. It is not difficult to establish the fact that Christianity did displace or suppress the other religions of the Roman Empire. MacMullen's discussion, therefore, centers upon his wish "to understand how the whole Empire was converted." (Traces of this concern can be found in his *Paganism in the Roman Empire* [Yale, 1981].) That which chiefly interests him is the individual non-Christian who is involved in the "action of coming over" (p. 10). One could add, however, that his other interest is to set the record straight about the feasibility of obtaining an answer to such an inquiry.

MacMullen's approach begins with the premise that in order to understand the conversion of the Empire, it is first necessary to ascertain the prior views of converts and the nature of the psychological moment when they assent to the reality and supreme power of God and choose to obey Him. What did they understand about the nature and function of religion and how did this affect their appropriation of Christianity? These views, MacMullen contends, have been grossly overlooked in other related works.

"Coming over," however, must be examined not only in light of the witness of Justin, Augustine, and the like, but more importantly from the perspective of the regular vanilla-type convert. MacMullen states that the large groups of people who

elected to recognize the Christian deity represent the true historical significance of the development. Considering conversion in this way, he concludes that the sources do not describe "coming over" as a complicated, intense, or consuming movement. For the vast majority of converts, it consisted of a configuration of factors centering upon acknowledging the publicly demonstrable power of the Christian God and, after 312, the pragmatic concern for imperial benefactions.

MacMullen proceeds by examining sources for what non-Christians and Christians presented about the "broad outlines of the acceptable in religion." It is assumed that those who came over to the Christian religion would have had to find it defined within reasonably familiar parameters. The limits to those parameters were a belief in immortality and the power of the daemonic world over the sublunar world. MacMullen rightly points out the "unsteady focus" on the role of Jesus throughout the Christian literature of this period. Sufficient for conversion was to acknowledge the truth that there was one true God over the host of spiritual beings. Divine wrath waited for the non-believer and immortal delights were the reward of the converted. Only the crudest picture of Christianity is said to comprise the great part of what was presented in the predominantly face-to-face contacts.

The place of contact in most cases was the workplace or marketplace. People confronted people with stories about which daemon provided the best blessings. Since a primary function of Graeco-Roman religion was to make the infirm well, the battleground for the vast majority of confrontations was healing. The evidence adduced stresses the role of the supernatural in conversion, i.e., that which was perceived as supernatural.

There was no organized or institutional approach to unbelievers (i.e., there is no evidence of a propaganda ministry). Neither institutions nor individual apologetic literature could account for the growth in the number of converts. Conversions were primarily reported in large numbers as the result of head-on-head competition in probative spiritual demonstration. The cases studied indicate that the motive for conversion was avoidance of divine wrath and gaining the visible, personal benefits afforded adherents.

The conversion of Constantine is described as the great watershed in the development. Constantine assigned many benefactions to the Christian Church, altering radically its status in Roman society. MacMullen is quick to add that, though a convert, there is little that would indicate that Constantine possessed any sophisticated knowledge about Christian doctrine.

Economic and social status heavily influenced those who were in proximity to the court. MacMullen extends this influence to various underlings in "trickle-down" fashion. To those conversions which took place under duress and by sincere conviction there is added conversion through a subtle mixture of social and material rewards (p. 58). To ignore inducements such as Imperial benefactions and legal sanctions against pagan religions, as MacMullen indicates a theologian is free to do, is not responsible historical research.

Paganism's matrices of relationships of people to institutions, nature, time, and each other would not alter quickly or easily. Paganism died very hard and more than traces of traditional cultus remained for centuries. A "Christian way of life" took a great deal of time to evolve. It is hard to determine daily behavior in ancient Rome let alone assess the thoughts and feelings to which behavior points. Conclusions, therefore, about what it meant to be a "convert" in this period (i.e., what it meant to be a Christian) will be speculative. They must not, however, be the result of what it means today.

In the summary, MacMullen states that, at best, only half truths can be assembled. The search must center upon those elements which had the most historical impact. MacMullen argues that this examination must proceed in the context of definitions of religion and conversion that take the prior views of the converts into consideration. One must assemble the best possible pagan perspective on the message Christianity presented. Nothing counts for more than 312 (p. 102). Keeping what one had added a strong incentive to the greatly successful out-patient program which had begun the great excursion into the curious realm of Christianity.

I am glad that time was taken to write this book. It is illuminating and disruptive. Contrary to the statement in the preface, this is not just for non-specialists (if indeed, any one else has the presupposed knowledge of the work of A. Jones, A. D. Nock and M. Rostovtseff).

The style is comfortable and easy though at times the manner is pert. Many passages seem tauntingly reproachful. Perhaps it is not "non-theology" as much as "anti-theology" that best describes the posture. Sarcasm is the warp to his historical weft. I am not sure why. He has set about to write a book destined to present inconclusive results. This was by design, and as a reminder to others. In contrast to those who allege that this work is reductionistic and an oversimplification, I feel that he has written to avert such errors.

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Schatkin, Margaret A. and Harkins, Paul W. (translators). *St. John Chrysostom, Apologist: Discourse on Blessed Babylas and Against the Greeks—Demonstration Against the Pagans that Christ is God*. The Fathers of the Church, vol. 73. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1985. Pp. xii + 298.

The two works of John Chrysostom published here are more than simple examples of his approach to apologetics, for they offer insight into his world from diverse viewpoints, both religious and cultural. This edition of the *Discourse on Babylas* is the first English translation of the treatise and is based on a critical edition prepared for *Sources Chrétiennes* by the translator, Margaret A. Schatkin. A long introduction, which discusses various aspects of the treatise, its background, and content, is supplemented by an extensive bibliography, a general index, and an index of scriptural

texts. Paul W. Harkins's translation of the *Demonstration against the Pagans that Christ is God* is based on an unpublished critical edition by Norman G. McKendrick. The two treatises are printed as separate works, so that Harkins has prepared an introduction, a brief bibliography, and two indices for his own text. Both apologies are addressed to pagan audiences, although the second one probably also had Jewish opponents in mind.

Schatkin's long and interesting introduction touches on a wide variety of topics. For example, she analyzes the various elements in pagan thought that Chrysostom confronts, and the major figures who emerge are Porphyry, Hierocles, and the emperor Julian. Her remarks about Babylas lead to an extended study of third- and fourth-century historians and historiography. The treatise itself is more than a mere eulogy of Babylas, a third-century bishop of Antioch and martyr, for Chrysostom takes the occasion to refute a variety of charges against Christianity, not the least of which is the claim that its success is due to fraud. He shows instead that it flourished because of Christ's power and excellence as a teacher. He defends the veneration of martyrs and relics, shows that apostolic miracles are not fictions, and strives in general to prove the superiority of Christianity over paganism. In the process he imparts a great deal of information about contemporary piety and religious practices. Schatkin's translation is accurate and reads well, and is, therefore, a welcome and useful addition to the English corpus of Chrysostom.

The work of Paul Harkins will need little introduction to those familiar with The Fathers of the Church, for he has published two other volumes of Chrysostom (68 and 72) prior to this one. The introduction reflects his deep knowledge of Chrysostom's life and work, and his translation is, as always, skillfully done. The treatise attempts to prove the divinity of Christ, not through his signs and miracles, which the audience would not have accepted, but rather through the fulfillment of prophecies. The first group is the Old Testament prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ, through which Chrysostom refutes Jewish opponents by means of their own scripture. He then discusses predictions made by Jesus about the future prosperity of his church (against which the gates of hell will not prevail: Mt. 16:18), and about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (not one stone of which will be left upon another: Mt. 24:2). The growth and spread of Christianity and the fall of Jerusalem were, for Chrysostom, historical realities that fulfilled Christ's predictions and could be known by all. For this reason he felt that they proved beyond doubt that Christ is God. A very extensive general index provides easy access to the contents of this volume.

These two treatises shed new light on an aspect of Chrysostom's work that has not been generally available to readers in English translation. This volume is, therefore, a valuable addition to The Fathers of the Church and maintains the high standard of quality attained by recent volumes.

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Pauck, Wilhelm. *From Luther to Tillich. The Reformers and their Heirs*. Edited by Marion Pauck. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984. Pp. xxiii + 223. \$19.95.

This admirable tribute to the historical and critical mind of Wilhelm Pauck is edited by his widow and contains a six-page chronology of the major events of his life, together with a lively memoir by way of introduction from his former student, Jaroslav Pelikan.

The study begins with a superb chapter on the dynamism of Luther's understanding of faith, while the fourth shows how this needed to be supplemented by Melancthon's definitional and scholastic approach to theology. The second chapter illuminates Butzer's moralistic and Erasmian blurring of Luther's dichotomy of Church and State, while the third chapter explains how much Calvin learned from Butzer in developing his theology of predestination and the Lord's Supper, as well as on the organization of the structure of the Reformed Church. Indeed, Pauck even makes the controversial assertion: "The type of Church which we call Calvinistic or Reformed is really a gift of Martin Butzer to the world through the work of his strong and brilliant executive Calvin" (p. 29).

Chapter five is the study of Schleiermacher as historian, arguing that his ambiguity is due to a double concentration upon the goal as well as the center of history.

Finally, there are four fresh and vivid chapters on his three most famous teachers at the University of Berlin—Harnack, Troeltsch, and Holl—and on his friend and colleague at the University of Chicago and at Union Seminary in New York, Paul Tillich. These chapters, unlike the all too brief and summary evaluation of Barth in terms of his *Outline of Dogmatics*, are vivid, anecdotal, and judicious assessments of the life work of these scholars. They are essential pointers to the development of Christian thought in the twentieth century by a master teacher. The earlier chapters on the Reformers have behind them all the detailed research and Germanic thoroughness for which Pauck was renowned, and an enviable command of the nuances of the English language.

HORTON DAVIES
Princeton University

Washington, James M. (ed.). *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings of Martin Luther King, Jr.* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986. Pp. 676. \$22.50.

Ministers, laity, civic leaders, scholars, and many others have long wished for a volume containing the essential writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. Happily, Professor James Washington of Union Theological Seminary, New York, has fulfilled that wish by editing this work. It is a book that should be viewed as indispensable in the library of everyone interested in social justice since the logic of Martin Luther King's philosophy and actions, relative to civil rights in America, had global implications for justice everywhere. He spoke out against apartheid in South Africa, war in Vietnam, poverty and hunger everywhere. In fact, he addressed all the crucial moral issues of his day with prophetic passion, ethical insight, and political wisdom.

His courageous stand impressed itself on the world at large and he became the embodiment of justice for all who were victims of oppression. After discovering the ready compatibility between Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and the black Christian tradition in which he had been raised, he embarked as a young man under thirty on a campaign to dismantle the major structures of racial injustice in the most violent states of the union. His success was achieved at the expense of many lives including his own. But through it all he brought together one of the most spectacular coalitions of whites and blacks ever seen in the history of the nation. This is a story that is told in his own words. It is much richer than an autobiography because his words are those spoken in the midst of the struggle. Hence, these writings become for us a chronicle of the times. Yet they are more than historical documents because they contain religious vision, theological understandings, and ethical principles that are meaningful for all times and for all peoples. The book is well titled: *A Testament of Hope*.

Professor Washington has organized the collection in five parts: In Part I we discover essays depicting his religious, social, and political philosophy; Part II contains a collection of his most notable sermons and public addresses; Three "historic" essays are set forth in Part III and Part IV contains several significant public interviews. Finally Part V contains sizable excerpts from his five published books. A selected bibliography and a helpful index complete this excellent collection.

Finally, but not least, with a broad brush, Professor Washington's Introduction to the volume describes the mission of Martin Luther King, Jr., under a title that tells its own story, "Martyred Prophet for a Global Beloved Community of Justice, Faith, and Hope." Reflecting on his life, thought, and action, Washington describes succinctly and meaningfully the life of this prophet and his challenge to America and the world. The following quotation is an example of its interpretative power:

No other black leader, however, has quite equalled the rich social and religious artistry of Martin Luther King, Jr. He was indeed a world historical figure. He captured the spotlight of history precisely at the right time, and responded with a blueprint for what America could become if it trusted its democratic legacy. His dream proved to be too threatening. It implied a massive redistribution of wealth and resources. He was murdered. But his dream still excites our social and political imaginations. It beckons us to work, to realize the dream that America can indeed be a truly pluralistic society, and that the planet Earth can be a place in the universe where peace, justice, and freedom are the dominant ethos. By calling his vision a *dream*, King reformulated a great hypothesis that the founders of this republic held dear, and that the twentieth century yearns to see made real in the twenty-first century. He believed, to use the words of James Baldwin in a recent open letter to Bishop Desmond Tutu, that "black freedom will make white freedom possible. Indeed, *our* freedom, which we have been forced to buy at so high a price, is the only hope of freedom that they have."

The book is appropriately dedicated to Bishop Desmond Tutu and all those who struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa.

PETER J. PARIS
Princeton Theological Seminary

Blizzard, Samuel W. (with the assistance of Harriet B. Blizzard). Introduction by Hart M. Nelsen. *The Protestant Parish Minister: A Behavioral Science Interpretation*. Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Monograph Series, no. 5. Storrs, CT: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Business Office, 1985. Pp. 195. \$8.00 (paper).

In the mid-1950s, Samuel W. Blizzard undertook a social scientific study of the Protestant ministry. Although not the first sociologist to study the ministry, Blizzard's work struck a responsive chord. Articles based on the research caught the attention of clergy, theological educators, and denominational ministry boards. Further, Blizzard's study proved to be a catalyst of a considerable subsequent body of research on ministry and theological education by sociologists, a number of whom were Blizzard's students. For various reasons—especially perhaps Blizzard's perfectionism—the full research report was not published during Blizzard's lifetime. Instead, he continued to rework his manuscript while using it as the basis for courses on the ministry at Princeton Theological Seminary. Following his death in 1976, his widow, Harriet B. Blizzard, took up the task of readying the manuscript for publication. That task came to fruition with the publication of the first ten chapters (chapters 11 and 12 were not in publishable form) in the Monograph Series of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion. Hart M. Nelsen, a former student of Blizzard, has provided an excellent introduction which summarizes Blizzard's theoretical approach to the ministry and also reviews much of the subsequent research on the ministry which Blizzard's work stimulated.

A major question regarding a work based on approximately 30-year-old data is whether it is now primarily of historical interest or does it still inform our understanding of ministry in the late 1980s. If only for historical reasons—providing a window into the state of the ministry at a particularly interesting time in modern church history—the book makes a contribution, and its publication should be welcomed. But I also believe that Blizzard's social scientific perspective on the ministry and his interpretation of the data have continuing relevance for those concerned about the ministry today.

The research is based on the responses of 1,111 Protestant parish ministers from twenty-two denominations who completed a mailed questionnaire. Respondents represented just under seventy percent of those sampled. Questions were essentially open-ended and analyzed using the technique of content analysis.

Blizzard sets his work clearly in a social science perspective, drawing especially on the sociology of the professions and role theory. His approach is functional, as distinguished from normative or descriptive, and involves viewing the minister as an actor interacting within a religious system and in relation to other religious systems in society.

The heart of Blizzard's approach and, I believe, his enduring contribution to ministry studies, is his creative use of role theory. Ministers' roles are conceived at three "nested" levels, which Blizzard calls the "master role," "integrative roles," and

“practitioner roles.” It is not simply their personal characteristics, but also variations in the ways that ministers define themselves in these three role types, that make for important differences among ministers. A minister’s *master role* is how he/she defines him or herself as minister and distinguishes the minister’s occupational role from other occupations. The *integrative role* focuses on goals and objectives of ministry and gives direction to one’s ministry. The *practitioner roles* are concerned with particular means or professional skills that a minister employs to attain the goals of ministry. In separate chapters, Blizzard describes each of the role types and identifies various ways that ministers define each of them. He also analyzes personal and social correlates of the various definitions. Another chapter considers time allocation among the various practitioner roles. The relationship between the three types of roles and their relation to ministers’ perspectives on the church are examined in the final two chapters of the book.

The variety of ways each type of role is defined need not be summarized here. Suffice it to say that the threefold scheme is of continuing importance for thinking about professional ministry. Too much teaching and writing about the practice of ministry focuses almost exclusively on skills or techniques for ministry practice—the practitioner roles—and ignores the grounding of those skills in a broader orientation to ministry, especially one’s basic purposes and goals. Often clergy borrow techniques that promise “effective ministry” without reflecting on the techniques’ appropriateness to their theology and goals for ministry (their master and integrative roles). Keeping these higher order purposes in view is critical for integrity in ministry.

Blizzard also distinguishes between traditional and contemporary role definitions for both integrative and practitioner roles and highlights a related issue for clergy: Clergy sometimes have difficulty with contemporary role definitions because these definitions do not have the normative grounding that is true of more traditional definitions. Although thirty years have elapsed since Blizzard’s articulation of the “minister’s dilemma,” it is probably safe to say that church management and administrative roles are still not well-grounded normatively for clergy or laity and are often sources of role strain if not conflict.

Along with the traditional-contemporary distinction, Blizzard also distinguished roles as personal or occupational. Other sources of role conflict arise along this axis as personal roles (e.g., familial or citizen roles) in conflict with occupational roles. This analysis of role conflicts would have been enriched had Blizzard been able to include data from other partners in the minister’s role-set, e.g., laity, denominational officials, or family members; nonetheless, his discussion of role conflict continues to be relevant to present problems that clergy face and about which denominational ministry boards are concerned.

In addition to the contributions already noted, there is also the book’s importance in illuminating the distinctive role of the professional minister in the church system. In recent years a healthy recovery of the ministry of the whole church—clergy and

laity—has occurred. I applaud this recovery while noting that it often leads to considerable unclarity among clergy and laity regarding their distinctive roles in the church. While Blizzard's book studiously avoids the theological dimensions of this issue, it presents a clear and intelligent functional analysis of the distinctive clergy role that very much needs to be taken into account in any discussion of the meaning of ministry.

There are limitations to Blizzard's book. His methods of analysis reflect the technology of the era. Had he been able to use multivariate analysis (looking at the effects of several variables simultaneously) the analysis would have been much enriched. As it is, the serial testing of two-variable relationships both obscures more complex relationships and often feels "wooden" and repetitive. Also, the use of open-ended questionnaires—required by the advisory committee at the host seminary for the project—created problems of analysis that would have been alleviated by use of structured questionnaires. Presumably the committee's reluctance reflected a distrust of social science for dealing with "things of the spirit." Indeed much of Blizzard's subsequent career was spent trying to strengthen the role of social science in theological education—an effort that was, unfortunately, only minimally successful when one considers the seminary scene today. There is also the unfinished character of the book noted above. One would like to have a concluding chapter that pulls the various strands of analysis and interpretation together.

These limitations—and a few relatively minor substantive disagreements which I have with some of Blizzard's interpretations—do not diminish the worth of the book as a solid and informative contribution to the understanding of ordained ministry. It can be read profitably by social scientists and clergy alike. I would especially commend it to ministry boards and for use in seminary classes on ministry, M.Div. and D.Min.

JACKSON W. CARROLL
Hartford Seminary

Wolff, Hans Walter. *Old Testament and Christian Preaching*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986. Pp. 110.

Among the more frequently recurring problems in the homiletical knapsack, none creates more avenues of approach than how to preach from the Old Testament within the Christian context. Not many books or position papers have focused on the art or method of this responsible facet of the pulpit ministry, largely because some preachers have not had well-rounded notions about how it should be done, while others see little difference here methodologically from sermons from a New Testament perspective. The several monographs on this theme in recent years give the impression of looking over their shoulder at George Adam Smith *et alia* who made *The Expositor's Bible* a classic almost a century ago. Some good suggestions are scattered over discrete chapters in books on biblical preaching and helpful examples

of interpretative methods are found in writings by Paterson, Stevenson, Cox, Terrien, and Yates, to mention a limited number.

Probably the most useful literature for guidance on this subject is found in sermons which by virtue of their quality and impact upon the reader suggest to us how effective preaching on Old Testament pericopes can and ought to be done. In a slim paperback, *Old Testament and Christian Preaching*, Hans Walter Wolff does for us a real service in and through ten sermons where "he demonstrates how the literature of ancient Israel can provide help for contemporary Christians." These expositions, along with two brief appendices about method, will go a long way "to encourage the use of the Old Testament as the living word for preaching today." Wolff, successor to Gerhard von Rad at Heidelberg, is well equipped to provide us with guidelines which he exemplifies with both exegetical and homiletical competence of uncommon stature. Here he shows "how one moves from scholarly exegesis, with its philological and historical focus, to Christian preaching" (p. 8). Proceeding from the conviction that the Old Testament has much to say to twentieth-century Christians, he supplies three simple rules for adequate interpretation: (i) inquire carefully into the historical meaning of the text to grasp its intention; (ii) compare the text with corresponding New Testament passages; and (iii) apply the text's kerygma to the contemporary hearers in ways appropriate to the original intention of the passage. In his Preface, Professor Stansell of St. Olaf College comments: "All readers will find here an uncommon liveliness of language and richness of theological insight which, when combined, make for provocative, forceful, and contemporary preaching of the gospel."

In this collection of sermons, Wolff gives us several chapel talks, a number of full length Sunday sermons, and even a homily he had delivered within a wedding ceremony. The majority of these merit a verdict of excellence, although several—and he can be forgiven for these few—are what we in America would dub "a klinker." His is not a uniform method of exposition; his homiletical patterns differ according to the nature or type of the biblical pericope he has chosen. The characteristics of his style may be summed up as follows: fresh and arresting insights; unity and orderliness as he gathers up his points as he progresses; a skillful combination of realism, frankness, and the factual; timeliness of direction into the face of vexing questions; and originality in his interpretative approach. His overall homiletical method indicates his ability to take an Old Testament passage and excise its meaning, always refraining from merely tacking on at the end a reference to Jesus ("just as . . . so ought . . ." business); instead he makes a smooth and seemingly unconscious transition from the perspective of the Old to that of the New Testament without our ever feeling any jolt. Some of these sermons are classics (e.g., "Stop," "The Essential Prayer," "Someone in Despair," and "The Church—A Hopeless Case"); his "Sodom and Gomorrah" attempt, however, merits Ugh!

Mature preachers will find here a helpful *modus operandi* to follow in making the ancient Word contemporary and will note in Wolff's frequently telling sentences

how a saving truth can be so expressed as to make restless minds to listen and indifferent hearts remember.

DONALD MACLEOD
Princeton Theological Seminary

Phillips, D. Z. R. S. *Thomas Poet of the Hidden God*. Allison Park, PA: Pickwick Publications, 1986. Pp. 186. \$18.00.

This is a remarkable book on four accounts. First, it is a book by a professional philosopher about a poet who is a priest in the Anglican Church of Wales. Secondly, this priest of a mountainous parish in Wales happens to be a distinguished poet and the editor of the admired *Penguin Book of Religious Verse*. Thirdly, and most unlikely, both poet and his philosopher-interpreter reject the conventional arguments for the existence of God and recognize, with a devastating honesty, the difficulties for belief in our contemporary technocratic and materialistic world. Fourthly, his poems insist, with Simone Weil, that God can only be present in creation under the form of absence, and the poetry is created from the hammer blows on the anvil of doubt, and is all the more memorable for that. As D. K. Phillips follows the heavy questions and heartaches of Thomas, his conclusion is: "In his pilgrimage in verse, the poet has shown us a road to God which cannot bypass the cry from the Cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" But this rough road was Christ's and is ours—and no other is as sure.

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